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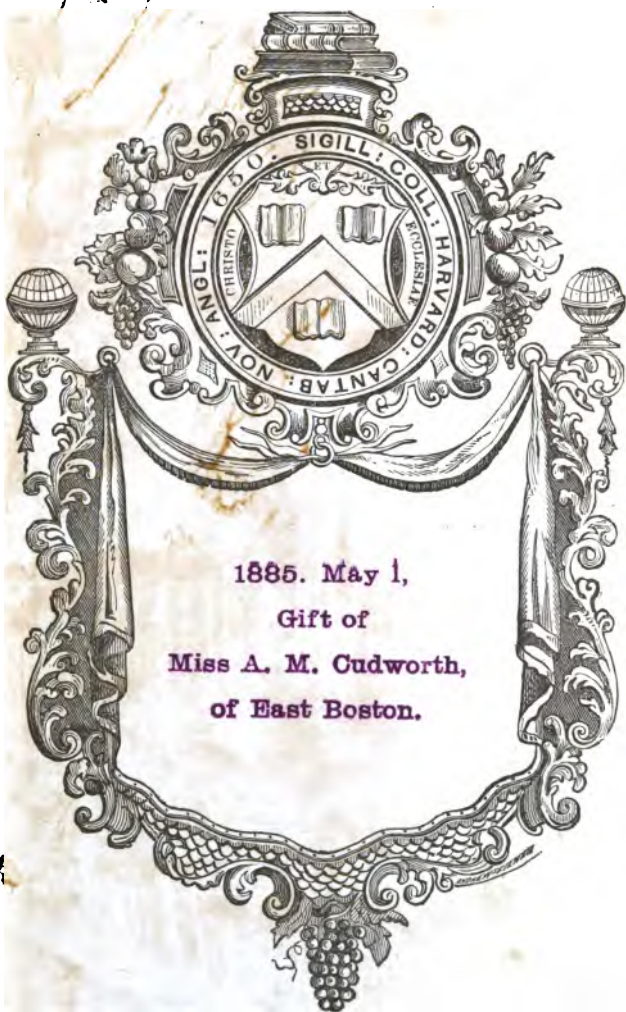
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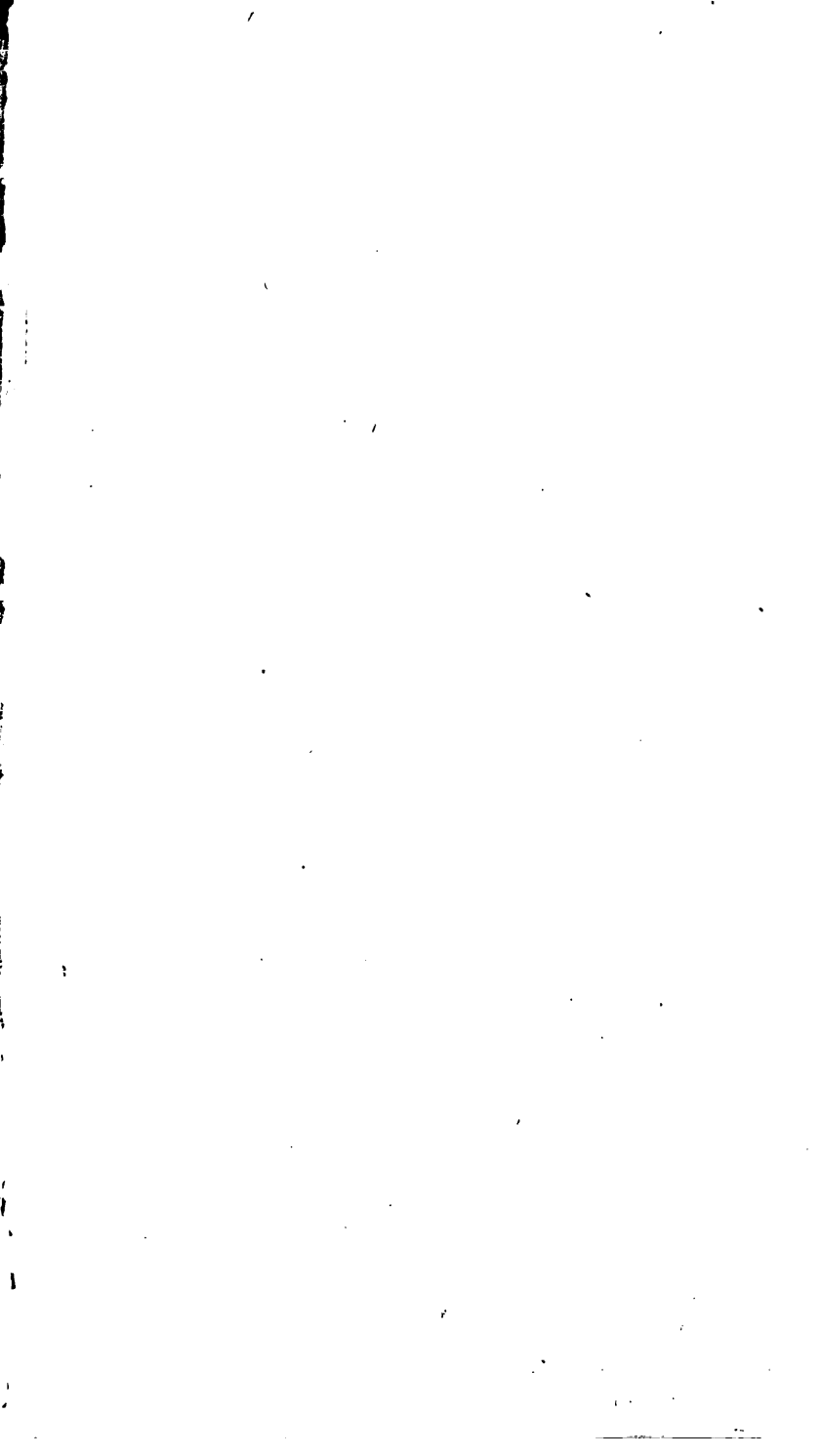
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PNEUMATOLOGIA:

OR,

A DISCOURSE

CONCERNING

THE HOLY SPIRIT:

WHEREIN AN ACCOUNT IS GIVEN OF HIS

NAME, NATURE, PERSONALITY, DISPENSATION,
OPERATIONS, AND EFFECTS:

HIS WHOLE WORK

IN THE OLD AND NEW CREATION IS EXPLAINED:

AND

The Doctrine concerning it Vindicated.

By **JOHN OWEN**, D. D.

SOMETIME VICE-CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.

ABRIDGED BY THE REV. G. BURDER.

FROM THE THIRD LONDON EDITION,

WITH ADDITIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS.

PHILADELPHIA:

PUBLISHED AND SOLD BY TOWAR & HOGAN, 255 MARKET ST
J. H. Cunningham, printer.

1827.

Found in Shipping Point
Battery March 12th 1862 and
presented to W. H. C. by
Charles W. Barnard.

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AMONG the numerous and valuable Works of Dr. Owen, his "Discourse on the Holy Spirit" claims a principal place: it has been thought by some, "An **EPITOME**, if not the Master-Piece, of his Writings." The subject is certainly of the greatest importance; and it is managed with that depth of judgment, solidity of argument, and fervour of piety which characterize his Theological Performances: but notwithstanding the intrinsic excellence of the work, it is undoubtedly too large, too learned, and too expensive for the generality of serious readers. It is, therefore, rather extraordinary that no Abridgment of it has yet appeared. The Doctrine of the Scriptures concerning the Holy Spirit and his gracious operations in the Church, is so intimately connected with every branch of Gospel Truth, and every part of Christian Experience, that a good Discourse upon it must be useful at any time; but if we consider how much the divine influences on the human mind are now slighted by some, and ridiculed by others, the republication of this admirable Treatise will appear peculiarly seasonable.

Dr. Owen, like many of his contemporaries, was a voluminous writer. Prolixity was the fashion of the age. Indeed, his profound learning, penetration, and experience, enabled him to exhaust every subject that he undertook; and it may be observed, that when the Divines of that day were excluded from their Pulpits by persecution, and devoted their talents to the Press,

the people read with avidity in the Closet what they were not permitted to hear in the Church. This may account for the number and bulk of Religious Publications in the last century: but the taste of the present day is not for ponderous folios. Modern Professors of the Gospel, having very frequent opportunities of hearing it in public, spend, perhaps, too little of their time in retirement; and those who do read, wish to have "much in a little."

The utility of Abridgments, when properly executed, is sufficiently obvious; and some of the most useful books in every science are of this description. The late Rev. Mr. Hervey much wished that the writings of our venerable ancestors were reduced to a smaller compass. In a Letter to a Friend he thus expresses himself:—"I wish some judicious hand would give us the quintessence of Dr. Owen's Works, each in a size portable both for the pocket and the memory: I really think it would be one of the most substantial acts of service which a Scholar and a Divine could perform for the present age."

The great disparity between a folio and duodecimo volume, may probably induce some persons to think, that only a small proportion of the original is retained. This objection would scarcely have been made to an octavo; and the Editor assures the reader, that much more matter is contained in this Abridgment than is generally found in a volume of that size. The Original is printed with a large type, in a small page; the Abridgment, with a small letter in a full page. The Author's large and numerous Quotations from the Greek and Latin Fathers are omitted; many extended digressions are passed over; the sense of many a long and perplexed sentence is carefully preserved in fewer words; and the repetition of the same sentiment, which sometimes occurred in one long paragraph, is studiously avoided. By these means, the substance of this excellent but prolix book is reduced to a moderate size; but such was the Editor's veneration for the memory of Dr. Owen, as well as his regard to fidelity, that no liberty whatever has been taken with the sense of the

Author, nor the least wilful misrepresentation made of his views in a single instance. The method also of the original work remains unaltered. —

To render this abridgement more complete, the Editor has made some valuable *Extracts* from other Treatises, composed by Dr. Owen, on those parts of the Work of the Spirit which were not comprised in the folio volume. It seems to be but little known that, copious and excellent as that volume is, it contained but a part of the author's original Plan; for, in his Preface, he thus expresses himself:—"These things, with several others of the like nature, falling unavoidably under consideration, have drawn out these Discourses unto a length far beyond my first design; which is also the reason that I have forborne to add to them those other parts of *The work of the Spirit in prayer,—in Illumination, with respect to the right understanding the Mind of God in the Scriptures,—in the Communication of Spiritual Gifts to the Church,—and in the Consolation of Believers*; which must now wait for another opportunity."

The Editor begs leave to observe, That Dr. Owen afterwards composed a Treatise on each of these important subjects; two of which were published by himself; and two others were published after his death, by the Rev. Nathaniel Mather.

From these four able Discourses, copious Extracts are made in the APPENDIX;* and the Editor conceives that the Reader will not only judge that they are necessary to complete a Discourse on the Work of the Spirit, but that they form some of the most valuable parts of it.

With what judgment and propriety the Editor has performed the difficult task, and whether he has omitted or altered too much or too little, must be left to the decision of the Public. Many imperfections will probably be discerned by a critical eye. However, he has the satisfaction of reflecting, that he has sincerely en-

* Those on Illumination and Spiritual Gifts are now added to this third edition.

deavoured to form a useful work ; and that he has put into the hands of many hundreds of serious persons the essence of a most valuable book, hitherto confined, in a great measure, to the studies of the learned ; and which he humbly hopes will be instrumental of much spiritual information, edification, and comfort to the people of God.

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A
DISCOURSE
CONCERNING
THE HOLY SPIRIT.

BOOK I.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES CONCERNING THE HOLY
SPIRIT AND HIS WORK.

CHAPTER I.

Introductory Discourse.

THE apostle Paul, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, chapter the 12th, directs their exercise of SPIRITUAL GIFTS ; of which they had received an abundant measure, and concerning which they had consulted him ; for the Lord “ having much people in the city of Corinth,” whom he intended to call, encouraged the apostle to go and preach there,—gave great success to the word,—and furnished the first converts with such eminent and extraordinary gifts, as might be happily instrumental in the conversion of others. In the exercise of these gifts, several persons had conducted themselves improperly, and had abused them to the purposes of emulation and ambition. On the information of some, who, loving truth, peace, and order, were troubled on this account ; and, in answer to a letter of the whole church, concerning these and other occurrences, he gives them his advice for the rectifying of such abuses ; and to prepare their minds for instruction, by exciting humility and gratitude, he reminds them of their condition before they were converted to Christ. “ You

know that you were Gentiles, carried away with 'dumb idols, even as you were led,'—hurried with violent impressions from the Devil into the service of idols. This he mentions, not to reproach them, but to let them know what frame of mind might be expected in persons who had received such an alteration in their condition. This alteration he further describes by the author and effects of it: "Wherefore, I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed; and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." The great dispute of the day was about Jesus. Unbelievers blasphemed, and said "Jesus was anathema." They looked on him as a detestable person. Hence, on the mention of him, they used to say "Jesus anathema!"—he is, or let him be, accursed, detested! And this was once the condition of the Corinthians themselves. On the other hand, believers called Jesus Lord. They owned him to be **JEHOVAH**, "over all God blessed for ever;" and they professed him to be their Lord,—the Lord of their souls and consciences; as Thomas did in his great confession:—"My Lord, and my God." Now, this great change in the Corinthians was effected by the Holy Ghost; for "no man can say that Jesus is the Lord," but by him. This expression includes both our *faith* in him, and our *profession* of that faith; which two, when sincere, always accompany each other; for as saying that Jesus was *anathema*, comprised an open disclaimure of him,—so the calling him *Lord* expresses the profession of our faith in him, and subjection to him; and that these are the works of the Holy Ghost, which none of themselves are sufficient for, shall hereafter be fully declared.

Having thus stated the original and foundation of the church, he further informs them that the same Spirit is also the author of those gifts by which it was to be built up and enlarged. "Now, there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit;" and to denote the unity of their Author, notwithstanding the diversity of the gifts, he calls him "the same Spirit,—the same Lord,—the same God." As he is called *The Spirit*, to de-

note which of the divine Persons is intended, so he is called *Lord* and *God*, to signify his sovereign authority in all his operations, and to produce in our hearts a due reverence towards him. Ver. 4—7.

With respect to their General Nature, the apostle distributes them into “gifts, administrations, and operations;” and then declares the design of the Spirit in their communication to the church: “but the manifestation,” or revelation, “of the Spirit, is given to every man to profit withal;” that is, the gifts whereby he manifests his care of the church; and his own presence, power, and effectual operations are granted to some, that they may be used for the edification of others. These gifts are further distinguished by nine different names:—Wisdom, Knowledge, Faith, Healing, Working of Miracles, Prophecy, Discerning of Spirits, Tongues, and Interpretation of Tongues. Ver. 8—10. But now, if there be such diversity of gifts, how can differences and divisions be prevented among those on whom they are bestowed? It is true, that such differences may happen; and did actually exist in the Corinthian church. One admired one gift, a second another, and so on; and among those who received them, one boasted of this or that particular gift, to the contempt of others; and those gifts which excited admiration were preferred to others of a more useful tendency. Thus the church was divided and distracted:—so foolish are the minds of men, so common is it for their lusts to “turn judgment into wormwood,” and to abuse the most useful effects of divine bounty! To prevent these evils for the future, and to manifest the harmony of these gifts in their source and tendency, the apostle declares both their author and the rule of their dispensation:—“All these worketh that one and the self same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.”

I shall not now insist on these words. Frequent recourse must be had to them in our progress; for I purpose, through divine assistance, to treat from hence of the Name, Nature, Existence, and Whole Work of the Holy Spirit: a work too great for me to undertake,

and beyond my ability to manage to the glory of God or the good of men ; for " who is sufficient for these things ?"—But yet I dare not utterly faint, while I look to him " who giveth wisdom to them that lack it, and upbraideth them not." The present necessity, importance, and usefulness of the subject, have alone engaged me to undertake it. These, therefore, I shall briefly represent in some general considerations.

First. We may observe that the doctrine of the Spirit of God is the *second great article* of those Gospel truths, in which the glory of God and the good of souls are most eminently concerned ; and without the knowledge of which the *first* will be altogether useless ; for when God designed the glorious work of recovering fallen man, he appointed two great means thereof :—The one was, " the giving his Son for them ;" and the other was, " the giving his Spirit to them." And hereby a way was opened for the manifestation of the glory of the whole blessed Trinity ; which is the utmost end of all the works of God. Hereby, the love, grace, and wisdom of the Father, in the projection of the whole ; the love, grace, and condescension of the Son, in the execution of the plan of salvation ; with the love, grace, and power of the Spirit, in the application of all to the souls of men, were made gloriously conspicuous. Hence, from the first entrance of sin, there were two general heads of the promises of God concerning salvation. The one respected the sending his Son to take our nature, and to suffer for us therein ; the other related to the giving his Spirit, to make the fruits of his incarnation, obedience, and sufferings effectual to us. The great promise of the Old Testament, was that of the " coming of the Son of God" in the flesh ; but when that was accomplished, the principal remaining promise of the New Testament respects the coming of the Holy Spirit. Hence the doctrine of his person, work, and grace, is the peculiar subject of the New Testament ; and a most eminent object of the Christian's faith ; and this must be insisted upon, as we have to do with some who will scarcely allow him to be of any consideration in these matters.

1. It is of great moment, that when Jesus Christ was about to leave the world, he promised to send his Holy Spirit to his disciples, to supply his absence. Of what use the presence of Christ was to them, we may in some measure conceive; for their hearts were filled with sorrow on the mention of his departure. Designing to relieve them, he makes this promise; assuring them thereby of greater advantage than the continuance of his bodily presence among them. "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless, I will come unto you;" that is, by his Spirit. "These things I have spoken unto you, being present with you; but the Comforter, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things. It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come. When he is come, he will convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. He will guide you into all truth, and shew you things to come. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shew it unto you." John xiv. 15, 16. This was the great legacy which Jesus bequeathed to his sorrowful disciples; and because of its importance, he frequently repeats it, enlarging on the benefits they should thereby receive.

It is in vain pretended, that only the apostles or primitive Christians were concerned in this promise; for though it was made to them in a *peculiar manner*, yet it belongs to believers universally, and to the end of time. As far as it respects his *gracious operations*, what Christ prayed for his apostles, he "prayed for them also which should believe on him through their word." John xvii. 20. And his promise is, That "wherever two or three are gathered together in his name, there he would be in the midst of them" (Matt. xxviii. 20); which he is no otherwise than by his Spirit; and this one consideration is sufficient to evince the importance of the doctrine; for is it possible that any

Christian should be so careless as not to enquire what Christ has left us to supply his absence, and at length to bring us to himself? He who despises these things, has neither part nor lot in Christ himself; for "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Rom. viii. 9.

2. The great work of the Holy Ghost in the dispensation of the gospel, is another evidence to the same purpose. Hence the gospel itself is called "The Ministration of the Spirit," in opposition to that of the law, which is called "The Ministration of Condemnation, and of Death." 2 Cor. iii. 6—8. The "ministry of the Spirit" is either that ministry which the Spirit makes effectual, or that ministry whereby the Spirit in his gifts and graces is communicated to men; and this alone gives efficacy to the gospel. Take away the Spirit from the gospel, and you render it "a dead letter;" of no more use to Christians than the Old Testament is of to the Jews. It is therefore a mischievous imagination, proceeding from ignorance and unbelief, that there is no more in the gospel than what is contained under any other doctrine or declaration of truth; that it is nothing but a book for men to exercise their reason upon. This is to separate the Spirit from it, which is in truth to destroy it; and to reject the Covenant of God, which is, that "his word and Spirit shall go together." Isa. lix. 21. We shall therefore prove, that the whole efficacy of the ministry of the gospel depends on the promised ministry of the Spirit, with which it is accompanied. If therefore we have any concern in the gospel, we have a signal duty before us in the present subject.

3. There is not one *spiritual good* from first to last communicated to us, but it is revealed to us, and bestowed on us, by the Holy Ghost. He who never experienced the special work of the Spirit upon him, never received any special mercy from God. How is it possible? For whatever God works in us, is by his Spirit; he therefore who has no work of the Spirit on his heart, never received either mercy or grace from God. To renounce therefore the work of the Spirit,

is to renounce all interest in the mercy and grace of God.

4. There is not any thing done *by* us that is holy and acceptable to God, but it is an effect of the Spirit's operation. "Without him we can do nothing" (John xv. 5); for without Christ we cannot; and by him alone is the grace of Christ communicated. By him we are *regenerated*; by him we are *sanctified*; by him we are *cleansed*; by him we are *assisted* in every good work. Surely then, we ought to enquire into the cause and spring of all that is good in us.

5. God assures us that the only remediless sin is the sin against the Holy Ghost. This alone may convince us how necessary it is to be well instructed in what concerns him. Thus saith our Lord, "All sins shall be forgiven to the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewithsoever they shall blaspheme; but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness." Mark iii. 28, 29, and Matt. xii. 32. This is that "sin unto death," whose remission is not to be prayed for (1 John v. 16); for he, having undertaken to make effectual to us the great remedy in the blood of Christ for the pardon of our sins; if he, in the prosecution of that work, be despitefully used and blasphemed, there can be no relief or pardon for that sin. For, whence should it arise? For as God has not another Son to offer another sacrifice for sin,—so that he by whom his sacrifice is despised, can have none remaining for him; neither has he another Spirit to make that sacrifice effectual to us, if the Holy Ghost be rejected. This therefore is a tender place. We cannot be too diligent in our inquiries after what God has revealed concerning his Spirit; seeing there may be a more fatal miscarriage in an opposition to him than human nature is capable of in any other instance.

Secondly. The deceits which have abounded in all ages of the Church, under pretence of the name and work of the Holy Spirit, make the study of this doctrine exceedingly necessary. Had not these things been excellent in themselves, they would not have been so often counterfeited. According to the value of

things, so are they liable to abuse; and the more excellent any thing is, the more pernicious is the abuse of it. In all the world there is nothing so vile as that which *pretendeth to be God*, and is not; nor is any thing else capable of so pernicious an abuse. For instance:

The most signal gift of the Spirit under the Old Testament, was that of PROPHECY. This was deservedly in great reputation, as having the impression of God's *authority* upon it, and of his *nearness* to man; besides, the prophets had the conduct of the minds and consciences of men; for they spake in the name of the Lord, and by his authority. Hence many pretended to this gift who were not inspired by the Holy Spirit; but were really actuated by an unclean and lying spirit; for it is highly probable that when men falsely pretended to *Divine Inspiration*, the Devil employed them to effect his own design; but these vain pretensions cast no contempt on the real gift of the Holy Ghost, but rather increased its lustre; for God never more honoured his true prophets than when there were many false ones: nor shall any false pretences to the Spirit of grace render him less dear to believers, or lessen the use of his gifts in the church.

It has been thus also under the New Testament. The Gospel was at first declared from the immediate revelation of the Spirit; preached by his assistance; made effectual by his power; and often accompanied by miracles. These things being acknowledged by all, those who had any false opinions to broach, could devise no better way to answer their ends than by pretending to immediate revelations of the Spirit. Hence the apostle Peter says, "There were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you."

Hence is that blessed *caution* and *rule* of the apostle John:—"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know we the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God; and

every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God." 1 John iv. 1, 2. Christians are here cautioned, not to give credit to every doctrine pretended to be of immediate revelation, but to try the spirits themselves. False teachers are called False Prophets and Spirits, in allusion to the false prophets of old, who fathered their predictions on divine inspiration; but who were really actuated by the Devil himself. Hence we are directed to try their pretensions, not by putting them on extraordinary works for their confirmation,—but by the doctrine that they teach. Let their doctrine be examined by the Scriptures, and if it be agreeable thereto, it may be safely received; but if it be contrary to Scripture, whatever authority is pretended, it must be instantly rejected. It is necessary also that we have a clear conviction of some *fundamental principles*. Thus, because strange imaginations about the person and mediation of Christ abounded in those days, the apostle directs believers to try the spirits by this fundamental principle:—"That Jesus Christ is come in the flesh;" which contains a confession both of his person and mediation. They were to demand of all new teachers, Do you confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh? and if they made not this confession, they never stood to consider their other pretences, but turned away from them; not bidding them God-speed: and thus it is the duty of all believers still to try the spirits; and those who would deprive them of this liberty, would make brutes of them instead of Christians; and this caution is peculiarly necessary when there are real and eminent effusions of the Spirit on the disciples of Christ; for when the use and reputation of spiritual gifts are great, Satan seizes the opportunity of introducing his own deceitful suggestions. Thus it was about the time of the reformation from Popery; and in this way of delusion he will still be more active, as God shall increase the gifts and graces of his Spirit in the churches.

Thirdly. There is in our days an *anti-spirit* set up against the Spirit of God, in his being and all his operations; for this new spirit takes upon him whatever is

promised to be effected by the Spirit of God. This is called by some, The Light Within, though indeed it be nothing but a dark production of Satan on their own imaginations; or at best, the natural light of conscience, which some of the heathens also called A Spirit. This teaches them, instructs them, enlightens them; and from hence they expect acceptance with God and eternal life. Now, because this is a growing evil, our duty to Christ and compassion for the souls of men, require that we should endeavour to obviate it; not by railing and persecution, as some have done, but by giving a full, plain, and scriptural account of the nature and operations of the Holy Spirit. Hence it will be undeniably manifest what a stranger this pretended light is to the true Spirit of Christ; how far from being of any real use to the souls of men; yea, that it is set up in opposition to him and his work.

Fourthly. There are many hurtful opinions concerning the Holy Ghost gone abroad in the world; and entertained by many, to the subversion of their faith. Such are those whereby his DEITY and PERSONALITY are denied. About these there have been many contests; but they have generally been so managed, that though the truth has been vindicated, the minds of believers have been little edified; for the greater part of serious persons are unacquainted with the terms of argument, which are calculated rather to silence gain-sayers than to direct the faith of others. Besides, our knowledge of things in general, is more from their operations and effects, than from their own nature: it is so particularly with respect to God himself. In his own glorious being, he dwells in light inaccessible; but in the effects of his will, revealed in his word and works, we are to seek him: and thus, we obtain a better acquaintance with him than by the most diligent speculations about his nature immediately. Thus it is with the Holy Ghost and his personality. He is proposed to us in the Scripture by his properties, works, and operations; by our duty to him, and offences against him. Therefore, though I shall briefly explain the scripture-testimonies of his Deity and Personality,

I shall chiefly insist on his administrations and operations; the due consideration of which will lead us into that assured knowledge of his being and subsistence which is necessary to direct our faith and obedience; and which will also throw much light on the whole economy of God in our salvation.

Fifthly. The principal occasion of our present undertaking is, the opposition that is now made to the Spirit of God and his work. Every thing of his is exploded and blasphemed. The very name of the Spirit is become a reproach. This indeed I have often wondered at; for, in the gospel, every thing that is good or holy is expressly assigned to the Spirit; and the state of men without him, is described as Christless and reprobate; yet many pretending to believe the gospel, are so far from desiring to partake of this Spirit themselves, that they deride those persons who avow any concern in him or his works; but such was his entertainment in the world at first; and we still find that "the world cannot receive him." Certain it is, that the promise of the Spirit was the grand support which Christ left to the church, to supply the want of his bodily presence, and to render the work of his mediation effectual: but it is now uncertain with some Whether the Spirit of God be of any use in the church at all! and they have not trembled to say, that those very things which are plainly ascribed to him in the Scripture, are "the cause of all the troubles and confusions in the world." Let them but have the word, outwardly revealing the will of God (as the Jews have to this day); and this being duly improved by their own reason, is all that is necessary to render their persons or duties acceptable to God. Of what use then is the Spirit of God? Of none at all, it may be, but only to make a noise in the world; and to fill the minds of men with "unintelligible notions." Had not these things been said, I would not have repeated them; for death lieth at the door in them. So then, men may pray without him, and preach without him, and turn to God without him, and perform every duty without

him well enough; and yet all this while they would be esteemed Christians!

These errors are at present charged only on private persons; when they are received by churches, they occasion a fatal apostacy. From the beginning of the world, the principal revelation that God made of himself, was the unity of his nature, and his monarchy over all; and herein the Person of the Father was immediately represented. In this state of things, the only apostacy of the church could be Polytheism and Idolatry. Accordingly, the people of Israel were continually prone to these abominations; and were continually punished for them. At length, God put an end to their idolatry, by their total desolation and captivity in Babylon. Again they were tried with a new Dispensation. The Son of God was sent to them in the flesh. To receive and obey him was now to be the principal trial of their faith. Here also the greater part of that church fell by their unbelief. The Jews being rejected, the Son of God calls another church; founding it on his own Person, with faith, and the profession of it therein. Matt. xvi. 18, 19. In this new church this foundation is fixed: "That Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is to be honoured even as we honour the Father;" and herein all who are properly called Christians agree; but now Christ being ascended to his Father, has committed all his affairs in the church and world to the Holy Spirit (John xvi. 7, &c.); and with this design, That the Person of the Spirit may be singularly exalted in the church;—wherefore the duty of the church now, immediately respects the Spirit of God, who acts towards it in the Name of the Father and of the Son; and with respect to him it is that the church, in its present state, is capable of apostacy from God; and whatever is found of this nature among any, has its beginning here; for the sin of despising his Person, and rejecting his work now, is of the same nature with idolatry of old, and the Jews' rejection of the Person of the Son.

Probably some will plead, That what is said of the Holy Ghost must be confined to the first times of the

gospel, when they were manifested by visible effects ; and consequently that we have no other concern in them but as in a recorded testimony to the truth of the gospel. This is so indeed as to his extraordinary and miraculous operations ; but thus to confine his whole work, is plainly to deny the truth of Christ's promises, and to overthrow his church : for we shall make it undeniably evident, that none can believe in Christ, or worship God in him, but by the Spirit ; and therefore, if his communications cease, so must all faith in Christ, and Christianity too.

The doctrine of the Spirit, and his work on the souls of men, in conviction of sin, in godly sorrow, in regeneration and sanctification, and his assistance in prayer, have been preached in the world. Men have been taught that the great concerns of their peace and comfort depend on his sacred influences. They have been urged to examine themselves as to their personal experience of these things ; and they have been solemnly assured, that if there be not an effectual work of the Spirit on their hearts, "they cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Multitudes in every age have received these as sacred truths ; and are well persuaded that they have found them realized in their experience : but all these things are now called in question ; they are looked upon as irrational and unintelligible notions. Hence it becomes indispensably necessary for us to "search the Scriptures, whether these things be so or not." I know indeed, that most believers are so well satisfied with their truth, that they will not be moved by opposition and scorn ; for "he who believes has the witness in himself ;" yet it is our duty to be so far affected by clamorous opposition to the truth, as to be excited diligently to examine the Scriptures for further establishment ; and upon mature consideration of the whole matter, I shall leave the reader to his option, as Elijah did of old : "If Jehovah be God, serve him ; and if Baal be God, let him be worshipped." If the things which the generality of professors believe concerning the Spirit, are revealed in the Scriptures, then let them abide in the holy profession of them, and re-

·joice in the consolations they afford: but if they are “cunningly-devised fables,”—vain and useless imaginations,—then it is high time that the minds of men were disburdened of them.

CHAPTER II.

The Names and Titles of the Holy Spirit.

It will be necessary, before we enter on the work itself, to speak something of the name whereby the Third Person in the Trinity is peculiarly distinguished in the Scripture. This is the SPIRIT, or the HOLY SPIRIT, or the HOLY GHOST, as we usually speak.

It is generally admitted, that the Hebrew and Greek words translated *Spirit*, signify *air in motion*, a breeze, breath, wind; that which moves and is not seen. These words are applied in the Old and New Testament to a great variety of purposes, because of some general ideas in which they agree; but there is little difficulty in discovering their true meaning; their design and circumstances, as to the subject treated of, determine the signification. Notwithstanding the ambiguous use of the words, it is sufficiently evident that there is in the Scripture a full and complete revelation of the Spirit of God, as one *singular*, and every way distinct from every thing else denoted by that name; and that whatever is affirmed of this Holy Spirit, relates either to his Person or operations. Sometimes he is called the Spirit absolutely; sometimes the Holy Spirit; sometimes the Spirit of God; the Good Spirit; the Spirit of Truth; the Spirit of Holiness; and sometimes the Spirit of Christ, or of the Son. The first, absolutely used, denotes his Person; the additions respect his properties and relation to the other Persons.

His name SPIRIT, is intended to signify his Nature or Essence; as he is a pure, spiritual, or immaterial substance. So it is said of God (John iv. 24) “God is a Spirit,”—he is of a pure, spiritual, immaterial nature; not confined to place, nor regarding one more

than another in his worship ; which it is the design of the text to evince. It will perhaps be said, That therefore this name is not peculiar to the Third Person ; but contains a description of the Divine Nature abstractedly. I grant, that the name *Spirit* is not, in the first place, characteristic of the Third Person ; but as it is peculiarly and constantly ascribed to Him, it declares his special manner and order of existence ; so that wherever the Holy Spirit is mentioned, his relation to the Father and Son is included ; for he is the Spirit of God. And herein there is an allusion to the breath of man. Hence our Saviour signified the communication of the Spirit to his disciples by breathing on them. *John* xi. 22. These allusions indeed are weak and imperfect, wherein substantial things are compared with accidental ; infinite with finite ; and eternal with temporary ; their disagreement is greater than their agreement ; yet such allusions our weakness needs, and gains instruction by.

Again. He is called by way of eminence, the HOLY SPIRIT ; and he is so called from his sanctifying us, or making us holy. This is his peculiar work ; whether it consists in a separation of things, profane and common, to holy uses and services ; or whether it be the real infusion of holiness in men. This work proves him to be God ; for it is God alone who sanctifies his people ; but this is not the whole reason of this appellation. He is called “the Spirit of God’s Holiness” (*Psalms* xli. 11) and absolutely “the Spirit of Holiness” (*Rom.* i. 4) ; and this respects his Nature in the first place, and not merely his operations. As God then is described by this glorious property of his nature, as “Holy,—the Holy One,—the Holy One of Israel,”—so is the Spirit called Holy, to denote the eternal glorious Holiness of his Nature ; and on this account he is opposed to the unclean or unholy spirit. *Mark* iii. 29, 30. “He that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness ; because they said He hath an unclean spirit.” And herein his Personality is asserted ; for the unclean spirit is a person ; and if the Spirit of God were only a quality or accident, as

some dream, there could be no comparative opposition made between him and the unclean spirit; that is, the Devil. They are also opposed with respect to their natures; his nature is *holy*, whereas that of the unclean spirit is *evil* and perverse. The *Holy Spirit* is so styled also with respect to all his operations; for he being the immediate operator of all divine works, and they being all *holy*, he is called the Holy Spirit.

Further. He is called the GOOD SPIRIT of God. "Thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of Uprightness," (Ps. cxliii. 10. Neh. ix. 10.) or rather, "Thy good Spirit shall lead me." He is so called, because his Nature is essentially good; "there is none good but one, that is God," (Matt. xix. 17.); and also, because his operations are all good; and to believers, full of goodness in their effects.

Again. He is commonly called the SPIRIT OF GOD; and the SPIRIT OF THE LORD; so where he is first mentioned (Gen. i. 2.) "The Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters." And I doubt not that the name ELOHIM, which includes a plurality in the same nature, is used in the description of the creation, to intimate the distinction of the Divine Persons. Now the Spirit is called "the Spirit of God," principally, as the Son is called "the Son of God;" for as he is so called, on account of his eternal generation,—the Spirit is called "the Spirit of God," on account of his eternal procession or emanation. He bears this name also, to distinguish him from all other spirits; and because he is promised, given, and sent of God, for the accomplishment of his will and pleasure towards us.

On the same account, originally, he is called the SPIRIT OF THE SON; and the SPIRIT OF CHRIST: "God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts." Gal. iv. 6. "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit; if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Rom. viii. 9, 10. The "Spirit of God," then, and "the Spirit of Christ," are one and the same. In the same sense therefore, that he is "the Spirit of God," that is of the Father, he is said to be "the Spi-

rit of the Son ;” for he proceedeth from the Son also. I confess he is also called “the Spirit of Christ,” because promised and sent by him, to make the work of his mediation effectual to his people ; but this he could not be, unless he had antecedently been the Spirit of the Son, by his proceeding from him also.—The apostle Peter, speaking of the prophets, says, they searched diligently as to the promises of salvation, afterwards to be fulfilled, “Searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify” (1 Pet. i. 10, 11) : so then, the Spirit who was in the prophets of old before the incarnation of Christ, is called “the Spirit of Christ.” Now this could not be, because he was anointed by that Spirit, or because he gave it afterwards to his disciples ; for his human nature (which was afterwards so anointed) did not then exist. The chief and formal reason why the Holy Spirit is called “the Spirit of the Son,” and “the Spirit of Christ,” is, because of his procession or emanation from his Person also. Without respect to which he could not be properly called the Spirit of Christ ; but on that supposition, he may be, he is, so denominated. Thus is the Spirit called in the Scripture : these are the names whereby the Essence and Subsistence of the Third Person in the Holy Trinity are declared. What he is called on account of his offices and operations, will be manifested in our progress.

CHAPTER III.

The Divine Nature and Personality of the Holy Spirit, proved and vindicated.

WE shall now proceed to the matter principally designed, namely, the Dispensation of the Spirit of God to the Church ; and I shall endeavour to fix what I have to offer on its proper principles ; and from them to educe the whole doctrine concerning it : and this in such a manner as to shew how much our faith, obedience, and worship, are concerned in every part of

it. For this purpose, let the following principles be observed :—

1. *The nature and being of God is the foundation of all true religion and religious worship in the world.* The great end for which we were made, is to worship and glorify God; and that which renders this worship our indispensable duty is, the nature and being of God himself.—There are indeed some acts of religious worship which chiefly respect what God is to us, or has done for us; but the principal reason of all divine worship, and that which makes it such is, what God is in himself. Because *he is*;—because he is an infinitely glorious, good, wise, holy, powerful, righteous, all-sufficient Being; the first cause, last end, and sovereign Lord of all;—therefore, he is to be worshipped: therefore are we to adore and love him: to praise, to trust, and to fear him. This is to glorify him as God; for as “all things are of him, and through him, and to him,—to him must be glory for ever.”

2. *The revelation that God has made of himself, is the rule of all religious worship and obedience.* His Being absolutely considered, is the formal reason of our worship; but this worship is to be directed by the revelation he makes of that Being to us: and the principal end of divine revelation is, to direct us in paying the homage we owe to the Divine Nature.

3. *God has revealed himself to us, as Three in one*;—as Three distinct Persons subsisting in the same undivided essence: and therefore, as such, he is to be worshipped. This principle might be here confirmed, but that I have done it elsewhere; for the whole ensuing discourse supposes and depends upon it; and indeed I fear that the failing of some men's profession begins with their relinquishment of this foundation. This has been the fatal miscarriage of the people called Quakers; and I wish it were so with them only; for there are many others who reject the doctrine of the Trinity as false, or despise it as unintelligible, or neglect it as useless. I know this ulcer lies hid in the minds of many, and expect it will break out and cover the whole body, of which they are members, with its de-

filements; but these things are left to the care of Jesus Christ. For the present I shall only say, that on this supposition, that God has revealed himself as Three in One, he is to be so considered in all our worship; and therefore in our initiation into the profession and practice of the worship of God, we are in our baptism engaged to it *In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* This is the foundation of our "doing all the things which Christ commands us:" to this service of God, as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we are solemnly dedicated.

4. *These Divine Persons are so distinct in their peculiar Subsistence, that distinct operations are ascribed to each of them.* Some of these actings are internal and mutual. So the Father "knoweth the Son, and loveth him;" and the Son "seeth," "knoweth," and "loveth the Father." John iii. 15. v. 20. vi. 46. So the Father is said to "give," "send," and "command" the Son, as he condescended to become Man and Mediator; and the Father and Son are said to "send the Spirit," as he condescends to become the Sanctifier of the Church. There are also distinct actings of each of the divine Persons towards the creatures. This is so evident from the whole Scripture, that particular instances are needless: besides, this will sufficiently appear when we consider the distinct actings of the Spirit.

5. Hence it follows unavoidably, *That the Spirit is in himself, a distinct, living, powerful, intelligent, divine Person;* for none other can be the author of those divine operations which are ascribed to him. It is therefore necessary that we enquire who, and what that "one and the self-same Spirit" is, on whose will all these things depend: for if men prevail in their opposition to his Person, it will be useless to concern ourselves about his work; for if the foundation of any fabric be removed, the superstructure will fall of course.

The doctrinal opposition made against the Spirit of God, may be reduced to two heads. Some grant his *Personality*, but deny his *Deity*. They say he is a created finite Spirit, the chief of all created spirits, and

head of all the angels ; and that he is called the Holy Ghost, on account of the work in which he is employed. This was the opinion of the Macedonian heretics ; since followed by the Mahometans, and by some of late among ourselves : but such is the folly of this notion, that it is now generally abandoned ; for such things are affirmed of the Holy Spirit in the Scripture, that to admit his *Personality* and deny his *Deity*, is the utmost madness. The Socinians, therefore, the great modern enemies of the Trinity, utterly reject this pretence : but the notion they advance in its room is no less pernicious : for, granting the things assigned to him to be the effects of divine power, they deny his *Personality* ; and assert, that what is called the Spirit of God, is nothing but a *quality* in the divine nature, or the *power* that God exerts for particular purposes. I do not design here professedly to contend with them about the whole of this matter, for every thing important in the dispute will occur in our progress : I shall at present confirm the *Divine Personality* of the Spirit with a single argument ; which I will boldly affirm, is such as the gates of Hell shall never prevail against. One thing, however, must be premised, namely, that the word *Spirit* is sometimes used to denote the Spirit of God himself, and sometimes his gifts and graces bestowed upon men. This being allowed, I think, it is impossible to prove the Father or the Son to be a Person, any other way than we may prove the Holy Ghost to be a person : for “ he to whom all personal properties, attributes, and operations are ascribed, and to whom nothing is ascribed but what properly belongs to a person, he is a person ; and so we are taught to believe him to be. Thus we know the Father to be a Person, and the Son also ; for our knowledge of things is more by their properties than by their essential forms. Now I shall confirm the assumption of this argument, not so much by any particular testimony, nor by the ascription of any single personal property to him, as by the constant uniform tenour of Scripture, in ascribing all these properties to him ; and there is no personal pro-

perty belonging to the divine nature that is not in one place or other ascribed to him.

If a wise and honest man should tell you, that in a certain country where he has been, there is an excellent governor, who wisely discharges the duties of his office; who hears causes, distributes justice, and comforts the distressed,—would you not believe that he intended by this description; a righteous, wise, intelligent person?—What else could any man living imagine? But now suppose, that a stranger, or person of suspicious character, should come and say that the former information was indeed true, but that no man or person was intended, but that the sun or the wind, which, by their benign influences, rendered the country fruitful and temperate, and disposed the inhabitants to mutual kindness; and, therefore, that the whole description of a governor, was merely *figurative*,—must you not conclude, either that the first person was a notorious trifler, or that your latter informer, whose veracity you had reason to suspect, had endeavoured to abuse both him and you? It is exactly thus in the case before us. The Scripture tells us that the Holy Ghost governs the Church; appoints overseers of it,—discerns and judges all things,—comforts the faint,—strengthens the weak,—is grieved and provoked by sin; and that in these, and many other affairs; he orders and disposes all things according to his own will. Can any man credit this testimony, and conceive otherwise of the Spirit than as a holy, wise, intelligent person? Now, while we are under the power of these apprehensions, there come to us some men whom we have just cause to suspect, and they tell us that what the Scripture says of the Holy Spirit is indeed true, but that no such person is intended by these expressions,—but only a quality or influence of divine power, which doth all these things *figuratively*;—that he has a will *figuratively*, and understanding *figuratively*,—is sinned against *figuratively*, and so of all that is said of him. Now, what can any man, not bereft of natural reason as well as spiritual light, conclude, but either that the Scripture designed to draw him into fatal errors, or

that those who impose such a sense upon it are corrupt seducers, who would rob him of his faith and comforts?—Such will they at last appear to be. I now proceed to confirm the argument proposed.

1. All that is necessary to this purpose is comprised in the form of Christian baptism. Our Lord commands his apostles to “disciple all nations; baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” Now, all will allow that the Father and the Son are distinct Persons;—but what confusion must it introduce to add to them, and to join equally with them, as to all the concerns of faith and obedience, the Holy Spirit, if he be not a divine Person!—and, if he be a person, but not divine, then this is to assign the same honour to a creature as to God, which is detestable idolatry!—and if he be not a person, but a virtue or quality in God, what sense can any man make of the words?

Besides, whatever is ascribed to the other Persons, is equally ascribed to him;—whatever is intended by the *name* of the Father and the Son, he is equally concerned in it. It is not the name *Father*, and the name *Son*, but the *name of God* (that is, of them both) that is intended;—and, by the name of God, either his being or his authority is signified. If it be used in the first way, then the being of the Spirit must be the same with that of the Father; if in the latter, he has the same authority with him; and he who has the name and authority of God, is God,—is a Divine Person.

Again: We are said to be baptised *into his name* (ΕΙΣ ΤΟ ΟΝΟΜΑ;) and no sense can be affixed to these words that does not include his personality; for they signify our religious owning the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in our worship, faith, and obedience. As we own the one, so we own the other; and if we own the Father as a distinct Person, so we do the Holy Ghost; for we are alike baptised into their name; equally submitting to their authority; equally taking the profession of their name upon us. Now, to conceive that any one who is not God, should be joined with the

Father and the Son for these purposes, without the least note of difference as to deity or personality, is to entertain a notion destructive of all religion, and tending to Polytheism.

2. His appearance under a *visible sign* argues his personal existence. He took the form or shape of a dove, to make a visible representation of himself by;* for a visible pledge was to be given of the descent of the Spirit on the Messiah, according to the promise; and thereby God directed his great forerunner to the knowledge of him. As at the beginning of the old creation, the Spirit of God moved on the waters, cherishing and communicating a vivifying quality to the whole, as a dove gently moves upon its eggs, communicating vital heat (Gen. i. 2) so at the new creation, he comes as a dove upon him who was the immediate author of it. It was not a real dove that appeared, but some æthereal substance, something of a fiery nature, I conceive, in the form of a dove; and this rendered the appearance more visible and glorious;—and the Holy Ghost is often compared to fire, because he was of old typified thereby; for, on various occasions, when sacrifices were offered, fire came down from heaven and consumed them. In the next bodily shape which he assumed, it is expressly said that it was *fiery*:—"There appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire" (Acts ii. 3) which was the visible token of the coming of the Holy Ghost upon them;—and thus also Christ is said to "baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire," (Matt. iii. 11); that is, with the Holy Ghost, whose purifying grace may be compared to fire. Now, this appearance of the Holy Ghost, in which he was represented by that which is a substance, manifests that he himself is a substance; for if he be merely an influential effect of the power of God, we are not taught right apprehensions of him, but mere

* Matt. iii. 16. Luke iii. 22. John i. 32. The words are ambiguous and may respect the *manner of his descending*,—as a dove descends; or the *manner of his appearance*,—he appeared like a dove descending. But this sense is determined, in the other Evangelists, to the *bodily shape* in which he descended.

mistakes by this appearance. These, with the like testimonies in general, are given to the divine personality of the Holy Spirit. I shall next consider those **PERSONAL PROPERTIES** which are distinctly ascribed to him.

First, **UNDERSTANDING**, or **WISDOM**, which is an inseparable property of an intelligent subsistence, is ascribed to him:—"The Spirit searcheth all things, even the deep things of God," 1 Cor. ii. 10. Now, to *search* is an act of the understanding; and the Spirit is said to search, because he knoweth: "No man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man," which is intimate to all its own thoughts; so the "things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." These things cannot be spoken of any but a person endued with understanding; and he who thus searches "the deep things of God," the mysteries of his will, counsel, and grace, is therefore a Divine Person, whose understanding is infinite. Observe also, that the Spirit is the author of wisdom and understanding in others; and therefore he must have them in himself; and hence he is called "a Spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and knowledge." Isa. xi. 3. 1 Tim. iv. 1. 1 Pet. i. 11.

Secondly. A **WILL** is ascribed to him; and this is the most distinguishing character of a person. Whatever is endued with an intelligent will, is a person. Now this property is ascribed to the Holy Ghost. 1 Cor. xii. 11. "All these things worketh that one and self-same Spirit, dividing to every man as he will." What can be spoken more fully to describe an intelligent person, acting voluntarily with freedom and choice, I know not; and I may add, that he who has the sovereign disposal of all spiritual gifts, having only his own will for his rule, is, and must be "over all God blessed for ever."

Thirdly. Another property of a living person is **POWER**. A power whereby any one is able to act according to the direction of his understanding, and the determinations of his will, declares him to be a Person. Thus Job speaks (chap. xxxii. 4.): "The Spirit

of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life." Creation is an act of divine power; the highest we can conceive of.

As he is called a Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, so he is also of "might or power" (Isa. xi. 3.); and if we suppose these to mean the effects of his operations rather than the properties of his nature, yet he who effects wisdom and power in others, must first have them in himself. To this purpose also is that demand (Micah. ii. 7.) "Is the Spirit of the Lord straitened?" that is, in his power, that he cannot work in the prophets and in his church as in former days? And the same prophet affirms (chap. iii. 8) that he is "full of power, and of judgment, and of might, by the Spirit of the Lord;" or, as the apostle speaks, "strengthened with might, by his Spirit, in the inner man." Eph. iii. 16.

To complete this argument, I shall add the consideration of those works which are ascribed to him; and which could not with any propriety be so ascribed, unless he be a person endued with divine power and understanding. And here I observe, that it is not from any single instance of his works that we shall confirm our argument; for some of them, singly considered, may perhaps sometimes be metaphorically ascribed to other causes; which do not therefore prove that they are persons also (which is the sum of our adversaries' objections). But as some of them, at least, never are, nor can be, assigned to any but a divine person,—so we take our argument from their joint consideration, or the uniform constant assignation of them all to him in the Scriptures, which renders it irrefragable. The nature of the works themselves shall be explained hereafter.

First. He is said to TEACH US: "The Holy Ghost shall teach you what you ought to say."* "The Comforter—shall teach you all things."† He is the "Unc-tion which teaches us all things:"‡ He is the great Teacher of the Church, to whom the accomplishment

* Luke xii. 12.

† John xiv. 26.

‡ 1 John ii. 27.

of that great promise is committed, "They shall be all taught of God."*

Let any man, not absolutely prepossessed with prejudice, read that discourse of our Saviour to his disciples, in which he purposely instructs them in the nature and work of the Spirit of God, and he will need no further confirmation in this matter. He is there called the Comforter; the name of a person; of one vested with office; and *another* Comforter to distinguish him from Christ, who was a Comforter and a person, as all allow. He declares that the Father would send him; that he would accordingly come; and that to teach, to lead, to guide them, and to bring things to their remembrance:—that he should testify, or bear witness; that he should reprove the world; that he should hear, speak, receive of Christ, and shew it to them. All these things are spoken, not occasionally, but in a direct continued discourse, purposely designed to inform the disciples who he was, and what he would do for them; and if nothing more were spoken of him in the whole Scripture, this alone would convince all unprejudiced men that he is a Divine Person.

There are two other remarkable texts to the same purpose. The first (Acts xiii. 2, 4) "As they ministered unto the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me (in the Greek, separate *unto* me) Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." Here observe the Holy Ghost's designation of himself, as the person to whom, and to whose work Barnabas and Saul were dedicated. Some *person* is certainly intended by the pronoun *me*; and the Holy Ghost is, no doubt, the person intended, the author of the command, and the object of the duty required. Now, to call men to the work of the ministry, is a free act of authority and choice, applicable only to a person; nor is either the Father or the Son more directly clothed with personal properties than the Holy Ghost is in this passage. The whole is confirmed, ver. 4, and "they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed." He

* John vi. 45.

called them to the work ; he commanded them to be set apart by the church ; and he sent them forth by an impression of his authority on their minds.

The other text referred to (Acts xx. 28) is to the same effect. "Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers."

—What was reported in the former text, in an extraordinary case, as matter of fact, is here doctrinally applied to an ordinary case. The same act of wisdom and authority is assigned to him, for he makes the overseers of the church. If he did so then, he does so now ; for these were persons not extraordinarily inspired, but the ordinary officers of the church ; and it is the concern of ministers now to inquire, what there is in their whole undertaking that they can ascribe to the Holy Ghost. Persons furnished with no spiritual gifts or abilities, engaging in this work for secular advantages, will not easily satisfy themselves in this inquiry, when they shall be forced to make it at last.

Another kind of testimony to the same purpose remains to be considered. The Holy Spirit is often spoken of as the object of such actions of men as can only be applied to a person. Thus he is said to be tempted : "You agree together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord." Acts v. 9. How can a quality, an accident, an emanation be tempted ? None can be tempted but he who has understanding to consider the proposals made to him, and a will to determine on them. So Satan tempted our first parents ;—so men are tempted by their own lusts ;—so are we said to "tempt God," when we provoke him by our unbelief, or make unwarrantable experiments of his power. Thus Ananias and Sapphira tempted the Holy Ghost, when they sinfully ventured on his omniscience, as if he could not discover their sin ; or on his holiness, that he would patronize their deceit. Thus Ananias *lied* to the Holy Ghost (ver. 3.) which supposes a person capable of hearing and receiving a testimony ; for a *lie* is a false testimony. In like manner he is said to be resisted, Acts vii. 59 ; which is the moral re-action or opposition of one person to another. We are also command-

ed not to grieve him, Eph. iv. 30; and they of old are said to have rebelled, and vexed the Holy Spirit, Isa. lxiii. 10. These things are so plain and positive, that the faith of believers will not be concerned in the sophistical evasions of our adversaries.

This truth is still more evident in the discourse of our Saviour (Matt. xii. 24,) concerning the sin against the Holy Ghost; in which the Spirit is expressly distinguished from the Son; they are both spoken of with respect to the same things in the same manner. Now, if the Spirit were only the *power* of God present with Christ, Christ and that power could not be distinctly spoken against. The Pharisees blasphemed, saying "That he cast out devils, by the prince of the devils." A person they intended, and described him by his name, nature, and office. To which our Lord replies, "That he cast out devils by the Spirit of God:" a divine person opposed to a diabolical one;—and then cautions them against blaspheming that Holy Spirit, by ascribing his operations to the Devil;—and blasphemy against him directly manifests who he is. It is admitted that blasphemy may be against the Person of the Father, Lev. xxiv. 11. The Son, as to his distinct Person, is, in this passage, said to be blasphemed; and it is added, that the Holy Ghost also may be distinctly blasphemed, or be the immediate object of that sin which is inexpiable. To suppose, therefore, that this Holy Ghost is not a divine Person, is for men to dream while they seem to be awake.

I trust that, by these testimonies, we have fully proved that the Spirit is an holy, intelligent subsistent, or Person;—a divine, self-subsisting, self-sufficient Person, together with the Father and the Son, equally participant of the divine nature. This will appear still more plainly from the following testimonies:—

1. He is expressly called God; and having the name of God directly given to him, with respect to spiritual things, or things peculiar to God, he must have the nature of God also. Ananias is said "to lie to the Holy Ghost;" this is repeated and interpreted: "Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." The same

Person is expressed in both places; and, therefore, the Holy Ghost is God. So also he is called **LORD**, in a sense appropriate to God alone: "Now the Lord is that Spirit," 2 Cor. iii. 17, 18; and we are changed from glory to glory "by the Lord, the Spirit," where also divine operations are ascribed to him. The same is drawn by just consequence from the comparing of Scriptures together; wherein what is spoken of God *absolutely* in one place, is applied *directly* to the Holy Ghost in another; for instance, "I will set my tabernacle amongst you; and I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people." Lev. xxvi. 11, 12. The accomplishment of this promise is declared by the apostle: "Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk among them," &c. 2 Cor. vi. 16. How, and by whom is this done? "Know you not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?—for the temple of God are ye." 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17. If it was God then who of old was promised to dwell in his people, and to make them his temple thereby, then is the Holy Spirit God; for he it is who, according to that promise, thus dwelleth in them.

Observe, in the last place, that divine properties are assigned to him; as *Eternity*,—he is the "Eternal Spirit:"* *Immensity*,—"whither shall I flee from thy Spirit?"† *Omnipotence*,—"the Spirit of the Lord is not straitened:"‡ *Prescience*,—"this Scripture must be fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of David, spake before concerning Judas:"|| *Omniscience*,—"the Spirit searcheth all things, even the deep things of God."∞ The divine works assigned to him are usually pleaded to the same purpose; but as we shall have occasion distinctly to consider them, we shall not insist upon them here. What has been proposed may be sufficient to shew who he is; of whose works and grace we design to treat.

* Heb ix. 14. † Psalm cxxxix. 7. ‡ Mic. ii. 8; compare Is. xl. 28.
|| Acts i. 16. § 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11.

CHAPTER IV.

Peculiar Works of the Holy Spirit in the First or Old Creation.

INTENDING to treat of those operations which are peculiar to the Holy Ghost, it may be useful, first, to speak of the operations of the Godhead in general. All divine operations, whether in nature or in grace, are usually ascribed to God absolutely; because the several persons are undivided in their operations, acting by the same will, the same wisdom, the same power. Each Person, therefore, is the author of every work of God, because each Person is God; and the divine nature is the same undivided principle of all divine operations. The divine Persons are *one* in essence; but in their manner of subsistence there is distinction and order among them. Hence every divine work is distinctly assigned to each Person, and eminently to one; as the work of creation is distinctly ascribed to the Father (Acts iv. 24.)—to the Son (John i. 3.)—and to the Spirit (Job xxxiii. 4.); but by way of eminence to the Father, and absolutely to God, who is Father, Son, and Spirit.

Divine works are eminently ascribed to one Person particularly, when a special impression of the distinguishing property of that divine Person is made on the work itself; as of the power and authority of the Father on the old creation, and of the grace and wisdom of the Son in the new; or, where there is a peculiar condescension of one Person to a work, wherein the other Persons concur only by approbation and consent. Such was the susception of the human nature by the Son, and such was the condescension of the Holy Ghost to his office, which entitles him eminently to his own immediate works.

Whereas the order of operation among the distinct persons, depends on the order of their subsistence. The completing and perfecting acts are ascribed to the Holy Ghost; hence they are also the most mysterious. The beginning of divine operations is assigned

to the Father ; “ for of him, and through him, and to him, are all things.” The subsisting, establishing, and upholding of all things is ascribed to the Son ; “ for he is before all things, and by him all things consist ;” and the finishing of all these works is ascribed to the Holy Ghost, as we shall find in our progress.

These things being premised, we proceed to consider the *peculiar operations* of the Holy Spirit in nature and in grace ; or, in the old and new creation.

The general parts of the creation are “ the heavens, the earth, and all their host ;” the forming and perfecting of which is assigned peculiarly to the Spirit of God. As to the heavens, “ by his Spirit he hath garnished the heavens, his hand hath formed the crooked serpent ;”—by him they were “ curiously wrought” and disposed ; adorned with the moon and stars, and rendered beautiful and glorious, to shew forth the praise of his power and wisdom.

It was thus also with the earth. God at first created out of nothing this inferior globe: the material mass of earth and water blended. This mass being thus framed and mixed, “ the Spirit of God *moved* on the face of the waters.” The word *moved* (MERACHEPHETH) signifies a *gentle motion*, like that of a dove over its nest, to communicate vital heat to its eggs, or to cherish its young. Without him, all was rude unformed chaos ;—but by the moving of the Spirit of God upon it, he communicated a prolific virtue. The principles of all those kinds and forms of things, which in an inconceivable variety compose its host and ornament, were communicated to it ; and this is a better account of the original of all things than is given us by any of the philosophers, ancient or modern ;—and as at the first creation, so in the course of providence, this work of cherishing the creatures is ascribed to the Holy Ghost : “ Thou hidest thy face,—they are troubled ; thou takest away their breath,—they die, and return to the dust.” Psalm civ. 29, 38. All creatures decay and die ; the earth itself seems every year to decline its use and end ; but “ thou sendest forth thy Spirit,—they are created ; and thou renewest the face

of the earth." The Spirit of God, whose office it is to preserve the creation, produces a new supply of creatures in the room of those that fall off like leaves from the trees, and return every day to the dust. By his influential concurrence, all things spring afresh, and the face of nature is renewed and adorned; but we must consider the work of the Holy Ghost with respect to the creation of man.

Man may be considered either naturally, as to the constituent parts of his being; or morally, with regard to his principles of obedience. The first is expressed: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." Gen. ii. 7.—As to the *matter* of which he was formed, it was *dust*; and this is mentioned to display the power and wisdom of the great Artificer, who, out of such contemptible materials, could form the admirable fabric of the human body; and to humble man by the remembrance of his mean original. Into this formed dust "God breathed the breath of life;"—a vital immortal spirit; something of himself: somewhat immediately of his own; not of any pre-created matter. Thus man became a middle creature, between the angels above and the sensitive animals below. His body was formed as the beasts, from matter; his soul was an immediate production of divine power, as the angels were. This was the work of the Holy Ghost. The Spirit of God and the Breath of God are the same; only one expression is proper, the other metaphorical. The creation of body and soul are both ascribed to him: "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the Breath of the Almighty hath given me life," Job xxxiii. 4.; and thus was man, the perfection of the inferior creation, formed by Him to whom the perfection of all divine works is peculiarly committed.

But we must consider man with respect to his *moral condition* also; and this is expressed in Gen. i. 26, 27,— "And God said, Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness:—So God created man in his own image:—" An universal rectitude of nature:—an ability

to discern the will of God with respect to the duty required of him; and a free, uncontrolled disposition to that duty. Now these were effects of the immediate operations of the Holy Ghost; for in the restoration of these abilities to our souls by regeneration, it is plainly asserted that he is the Author of them. Eph. iv. 24. Thereby he restores his own work; and thus Adam may be said to have had the Spirit of God in his innocency.

The works of God thus finished, are not deserted by the Holy Ghost. For as the preservation of the universe depends on the powerful influence of Divine Providence, so there are particular operations of the Spirit in all things, natural and animal, rational and moral. As to the first, we have seen that the succession of creatures and annual renovation of the face of the earth is from him. As to rational and moral actions, such as the great affairs of the world are disposed of by, he has also a peculiar efficiency. Wisdom, courage, and fortitude, which have produced such great effects, are of his special operation. Thus "the Spirit of God came upon Othniel;" with wisdom for government, and courage for war. Thus God "sent his Spirit on Cyrus, his anointed," to qualify him for the mighty work he was to effect. Isa. xlv. 1. Thus also Zerubabel was enabled to build the temple, notwithstanding the strongest opposition, that it might be evident to all that the work was effected, "not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord." Zech. iv. 6.

CHAPTER V.

The Manner of the Dispensation of the Holy Spirit.

BEFORE we treat of the Spirit's work in the new creation, we must first consider the general nature of God's dispensation of him; and of his own application of himself for that purpose; and on this subject, all that I have to offer, consists in the explication of those texts wherein they are revealed. We must therefore

consider, 1. What we are taught on the part of God the Father, with respect to the Spirit and his work ; and, 2. What relates immediately to himself.

1. God's disposal of the Spirit to his work is expressed in five different ways :—He is said to *give* him ; to *send* him ; to *minister* him ; to *pour* him out ; and to *put* him on us. (1.) He is said to be *given* of God : “ your heavenly Father will *give* the Holy Spirit to them that ask him :” Luke xi. 13. “ He hath *given* his Spirit to us,” 1 John iii. 24 ; and in many other places. Now this giving of the Spirit denotes *authority*, *freedom*, and *bounty*, on the part of God. It denotes *authority* ; for he that gives any thing, must have authority to dispose of it. It denotes *freedom*. What is given might be withheld. This is the *gift* of God,—not the purchase of our endeavours, nor the reward of our desert. Some men talk of purchasing grace and glory ; but both are to be bought “ without money, and without price.” The Scripture knows of no earnings that men can make of themselves, but death ; “ eternal life is the gift of God.” Answerably to this idea, believers are said to receive him. “ This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive” (John vii. 39) ; and “ We have received the Spirit, which is of God.” 1 Cor. ii. 12. Giving and receiving are relative terms, the one supposing the other ;—and as this also implies freedom on the part of the giver, so it implies privilege and advantage on our part. This expression also denotes *bounty* ; it is such a gift as proceeds from divine bounty : for God is said to give him to us *richly*. The greatness of the gift, the free mind of the giver, and want of desert in the receiver, all declare bounty to be the spring and fountain of it ; and on the part of those who receive this gift, how great is the privilege and advantage ! Some, indeed, receive him, as to some particular end, without any final advantage to their souls. They receive his *gifts* only, without his *grace* ; like those “ who prophesied and cast out devils,” and yet continued “ workers of iniquity,” and are rejected at the last ; but there is no gift of the Holy Ghost that is not good

in its own nature, tending to a good end, and adapted to the good of the receiver;—for though the direct end of some gifts be not the spiritual good of the receiver, but the edification of others,—yet there is that excellency in them, which may turn to great advantage. In general, to be made a partaker of the Holy Ghost, is an inestimable privilege and advantage.

(2.) God is said to SEND him. “The Father will send the Holy Ghost in my name,” John xiv. 26; and Christ says, “I will send unto you the Comforter from the Father,” John xv. 26. Now this also argues authority, freedom, and bounty. Only the word *naturally* implies a *local motion*; as a person who is sent removes from one place to another; but as local mutation is inconsistent with the *omnipresence* of the Spirit, we must admit of a *metaphor* in the expression; so God is said to “arise out of his place;” to “bow the heavens and come down;” to “come and see” what is done in the earth. Now no local motion is intended, there is only an allusion to it among mortals; for a creature cannot produce any effects where it is not. Thus the sending of the Spirit supposes that he does not produce the blessed effects of his power and grace, but in them to whom he is sent. He was not before in or with that person, for that special end for which he is sent by the Father; and this proves, by the way, that, in his gifts and graces, he is not *common to all*; or a *light* which is *in all men*, and which all men *may be in* if they please: for this would leave no place for this special act of sending him; which implies a choice of the object to whom he is sent.

(3.) God is said to MINISTER the Spirit (Gal. iii. 5): “He that ministereth the Spirit unto you;” he that gives you continual or abundant supplies of the Spirit. So in Phil. i. 19, “I know that this shall turn to my salvation, through your prayers and the supply;” (*epichoregia*) the “*additional supply* of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.”—Those who have received the Spirit, need a daily further supply; and this is given by God’s ministering his Spirit to believers.

(4.) God is said to PUT his Spirit in, or upon men:

"I have put my Holy Spirit upon him." Isa. xlii. 1. It is the effectual acting of God that is intended. He not only *gives*, and sends his Spirit to his people, but he actually *bestows* him upon them; so that they are really partakers of him. He efficaciously endows their hearts and minds with him, for the work and end which he is designed to.

(5.) God is frequently said to *pour* him out: "Behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you." Prov. i. 23. This important expression, wherever it is used, has a direct respect to Gospel-times; for though God gave his Spirit in some measure before, yet he was not *poured out* till the dispensation of the Gospel. Three things are comprised in this expression:—[1.] An eminent act of divine bounty. *Pouring forth* signifies an *all-sufficing fulness*, as "the clouds pour down rain." Hence the "renewing of the Holy Ghost" is said to be "poured on us richly." Men were converted of old by a rich participation of the Spirit; and so they must be still (whatever some pretend) or die in their sins. [2.] This pouring out has respect to the gifts and graces of the Spirit, and not to his Person;—for where he is given, he is given absolutely, and not more or less; but his gifts and graces may be more plentifully given to one person than to another; and to the same person, at one time more than at another. [3.] The expression relates to his purifying and comforting influences. He is often compared to water:—"I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean." So our Lord calls him "rivers of water;" and as it respects his refreshing those on whom he is poured, he is compared to rain: "I will pour water on him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground;" that is, "I will pour my Spirit on thy seed; and my blessing on thy offspring." He comes on the barren, parched ground of men's hearts, causing them to spring, and produce fruits of holiness and righteousness; and thus Christ, by his Spirit, "comes down like rain upon the mown grass; as showers that water the earth."—The good Lord give us always of these waters and refreshing showers!

2. We proceed to consider what is ascribed to the Spirit himself in his own application of himself to his work ; from which also it will plainly appear that he acts as a voluntary agent.

First. He *proceedeth* from the Father ; and being the Spirit of the Son also, he proceedeth from him in like manner : " The Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me." John xv. 26. There is (1.) a procession of the Holy Ghost, which is *natural* or *personal*. This expresses his eternal relation to the Persons of the Father and the Son. He is of them by an eternal emanation or procession ; the manner of which, is incomprehensible to us in this life. There is (2.) a procession of the Spirit, which is *dispensatory* ; the egress of the Spirit, in his application of himself to his work ; a voluntary act of his will. He thus proceeds from the Father of his own accord, in compliance with his sending him to render effectual the purposes of his will and the counsels of his grace.

Secondly. To the same purpose he is said to *come* :—" If I go not away, the Comforter will not come." John xvi. 7. His *coming* signifies, that, by his own will and consent, he works in the pursuit of his Father's will, where, or what, he did not work before ; and thus is our faith regulated with regard to the Spirit. For we may both pray the Father that he would give and send him to us, according to his promises ; and we may pray to him to *come* to us, to sanctify and to comfort us, according to the office which he has undertaken.

Thirdly. He is said to *fall* on men : " While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost *fell* on all them which heard the word." Acts x. 44. A *greatness* and *suddenness* is intended ; as when the fire (the type of the Spirit) fell down on the sacrifice of Elijah, the spectators were amazed, and cried out, " The Lord, he is God !" Wherever the word is used, some extraordinary effects, evidencing his presence and power, are spoken of ; and particularly when such a blessing was not expected.

Fourthly. Being come, he is said to *rest* on the persons to whom he was given and sent;—as Isa. xi. 3, “And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him;” that is, *abide*, and *remain*. Thus the Spirit of the Lord rested on Elisha, 2 Kin. ii. 9; and “the Spirit of God and of glory resteth on us.” 1 Pet. iv. 14. The word includes complacence and permanence; and he abides where he rests. “He shall abide with you for ever,” said our Saviour. He came only, on some men, to actuate them for some peculiar work; but where he *rests*, as in the work of sanctification and consolation, there he abides with complacence and delight.

Fifthly. He is said to *depart* from some persons. Thus the “Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul” (1 Sam. xvi. 14); and David prays that God would not “take his Holy Spirit from him,” Psal. li. 11. His departure from men is his ceasing to work in them as formerly; and as far as this is penal, he is said to be taken away. Thus he departed from Saul, when he no longer helped him with ability for kingly government. The departure of the Spirit is either total or partial. Some have been made partakers of his *gifts*, have been enlightened, have professed the Gospel, and performed many duties, yet have been entangled with temptations, and conquered by their lusts, and turned again to folly:—from such persons the Holy Ghost utterly departs; gives them up to themselves, and their own hearts’ lusts; all their gifts wither; their light goes out, and they have darkness instead of vision. The case of such is truly deplorable! From believers themselves he may also depart; but it is only partially, and for a season; for being given to them in the covenant of grace, the promise is express, that he shall never depart from them (Jer. xxxi. 33) utterly and totally. Our blessed Saviour assures us, that “whosoever drinketh of the water that he would give him,” meaning his sanctifying Spirit, “should never thirst;” never suffer a total want any more. This is “a well of water springing up into everlasting life;” but as to the degrees and sensible effects of divine grace, he may withdraw for a time. Believers may

be left to spiritual decays, and much weakness : “ the things that remain may be ready to die.” He may “ hide himself ;” or forsake his people for a moment ; and hence they may apprehend themselves utterly deserted and forsaken ; but from such persons he never utterly nor wholly departs.

BOOK II.

PECULIAR OPERATIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, UNDER THE OLD TESTAMENT, PREPARATORY TO THAT OF THE NEW.

CHAPTER I.

Prophecy,—Writing the Scriptures,—Miracles, &c.

THERE is nothing excellent among men, but it is ascribed to the Holy Spirit, whether it be absolutely extraordinary, and above the production of natural principles,—or whether it consists in an eminent improvement of those principles; and whatever he wrought in an eminent manner under the Old Testament, had generally, if not always, a respect to Christ and the Gospel, and so was preparatory to his completion of the great work of the new creation.

Those works of the Spirit, which were properly extraordinary, were *prophecy*, *inditing the Scriptures*, and *miracles*. Those which consisted in the exaltation of natural abilities, to answer the occasions of life and service of the church, we shall find in things *political*, as skill for government; in things *moral*, as fortitude and courage; in things *natural*, as increase of bodily strength; or in *intellectual* gifts, either in sacred matters, as preaching the word of God; or in artificial affairs, as in Bezaliel and Aboliab.

The first eminent gift of the Spirit under the Old Testament, and which had the most direct respect to Christ, was that of *Prophecy*; the chief end of which was to presignify him, his sufferings, and glory; or to appoint such things in divine worship as might be *types* and representations of him; for the highest privilege of the church of old was but to hear tidings of what we now enjoy. As Moses, on the top of Pisgah, saw the land of Canaan, and in spirit beheld the beauties of holiness to be there erected, so the chief joy of these

saints was to contemplate the *King of Saints* in the land that was yet very far from them. "Of which salvation the prophets have enquired, and searched diligently, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you." 1 Pet. i. 10, &c. The sum and substance of the prophetic work are declared in these words. God himself gave the first promise of Christ, which was the foundation of the church. Then by revelation to the prophets he confirmed that promise, giving them, from time to time, fresh discoveries of his person, sufferings, and glory. While they were thus employed, they diligently endeavoured to become acquainted with the things themselves; yet considering, that not themselves, but future generations should enjoy the actual exhibition of them. They also searched after the time of their accomplishment; both when it should be, and what *manner of time* it should be; or what would be the state and condition of the church in those days.

The communication of this gift began betimes in the world; and continued during the whole preparatory state of the church. God "spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began." God revealed many things to Adam himself, without which he could not have worshipped him aright; for though his natural light might be sufficient to direct him in the religious service required by the law of creation, yet not in the duties of that state into which he was brought by the entrance of sin. Hence he was directed to such ordinances of worship as were accepted with God; such were sacrifices. The prophecy of Enoch is recorded by the apostle Jude; and it is a matter neither curious nor difficult to demonstrate, that all the patriarchs before the Flood were guided by a prophetic spirit in the imposition of names on those children who were to succeed them in

the sacred line. Abraham is expressly called a prophet by God himself. Gen. xx. 7.

Now this gift of prophecy was the immediate effect of the operation of the Holy Spirit. Thus Peter testifies (2d Epist. i. 20): "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation" (or rather conception); "for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost:"—it was not the fruit of men's private conceptions; nor subject to the wills of men, so as to attain or exercise it by their own ability; but it was given by "inspiration of God;" the Holy Ghost actuating and guiding their minds. Wherever it is said that God spake by the prophets, or that the word of God came to them, the immediate work of the Spirit is intended. Thus Micah says, "Truly, I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord." Mic. iii. 8. Thus David speaks, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue." 2 Sam. xxiii. 2. He spake *to them*, or *in them*, by his holy inspirations; and he spake *by them* in his effectual, infallible guidance of them, to utter and write what they received from him without mistake.

Prophecy may be considered two ways: precisely, for the prediction of things to come; but in general, it signifies to interpret and declare the mind or words of another. Thus, God tells Moses that he would "make him a God to Pharaoh;"—to deal with him in the name and stead of God; and that "Aaron his brother should be his prophet;"—interpret his meaning, and declare his words to Pharaoh, Moses having complained of the defect of his own utterance. Hence, in the New Testament, those who expounded the Scriptures to the church, are called Prophets, and their work Prophecy; because they interpreted, or declared, the mind, will, or word of God to others.

This peculiar gift of the Spirit consisted in inspiration, or in breathing; and it is so called, from the nature and name of the Holy Spirit. The name by which he is revealed to us, signifies *Breath*; and there-

fore when our Saviour gave him to his disciples, he "breathed upon them." This expression also denotes the gentleness and facility of his operations on their minds, whereby he gently and softly breathed into them, as it were, the knowledge of holy things.

The immediate effects of this inspiration were, that those inspired were "moved," or "acted by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. i. 21); that is, he prepared and elevated their intellectual faculties, to receive and retain his divine impressions. So a man tunes the strings of an instrument that it may receive the impressions of his finger, and give out the sound he intends. He did not speak in them, and leave it to their natural faculties to understand, remember, and report what he had spoken;—but he himself acted their faculties, making use of them as his organs to express his words, and not their own conceptions; and this he did, with that light and evidence of his power, as left them under no suspicion whether their minds were under his influence or not. Men are liable so to fall under the power of their own imaginations; and Satan has often so imposed on the minds of some, that they have mistaken them for supernatural revelations; but in the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, he gave them infallible assurance that it was himself alone by whom they were acted. If any shall ask What were these infallible tokens? I must plainly say, I cannot tell; for these are things of which we have no experience. Nor is any thing of this nature pretended to by those who profess to experience the ordinary influences of the Spirit; though some have falsely imputed it to them; but this I say, it was the design of the Spirit to give those who were extraordinarily inspired an assurance, sufficient to bear them out in the discharge of their duty, that they were acted by himself alone. They were often called to encounter various dangers, and some of them to lay down their lives in the work; which they would not have done, without as full evidence of their inspiration as the nature of man is capable of, and such as secured them from all fear of delusion. On the word they delivered to others, there were such characters of divine truth as rendered it

worthy of belief, and not to be rejected without the greatest guilt ; much more then was there such an evidence in it to the persons inspired. The case of Abraham fully confirms it. The Holy Ghost also guided the very organs of their bodies, whereby they expressed his revelations. He guided their tongues, as the mind of a man guides his hand in writing. Hence David says, "My tongue is the pen of a ready writer," Ps. xlv. 1. And so with respect to the pattern of the temple, and the whole worship of it, he says, "All this the Lord made me to understand in writing by his hand upon me, even all the work of this pattern." 1 Chron. xxviii. 12. The Spirit guided him in writing it, as plainly as if every particular had been expressed in writing by the finger of God.

It remains, that we consider those means by which the Spirit communicated his mind to the prophets ; and these were chiefly voices, dreams, and visions : accompanied at times with symbolical actions and local changes.

1. God sometimes made use of an *Articulate Voice*. So "he spake to Moses face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend." Exod. xxxiii. 11. And perhaps the whole revelation made to him was in this manner. So God spake to Elijah, to Samuel, to Jeremiah, and probably to all the prophets at their first entrance into their ministry.—These voices were either immediately created by God himself, or by the ministry of angels : but the divine certainty of their minds was from an immediate internal work of the Spirit ; without which they might have been imposed upon by external sounds.

2. Dreams were also made use of under the Old Testament ; and to them also I refer those visions which they had in their sleep, though not called dreams. Hence that promise, "I will pour out my Spirit—your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams." Acts ii. 17. Not that God intended to make much use of these under the New Testament ; but the promise intends a plentiful effusion of that Spirit who acted by those means under the Old. Yet they

were sometimes used ; Paul had a vision in the night, Acts xvi. 10 :—but of old they were more frequent. God made a signal revelation to Abraham, when “ a deep sleep fell upon him—and an horror of great darkness.” Gen. xv. 12. Daniel also heard “ a voice and words in a deep sleep.” But this sleep, I conceive, was not natural ; but caused of God in a peculiar manner, that therein he might represent the image of things to their imaginations ; and this way of revelation was so common, that one who pretended to prophecy would cry out, “ I have dreamed, I have dreamed.”

3. God revealed himself by visions to the prophets ; hence they were called *Seers*. Isaiah terms his whole glorious prophecy “ the vision which he saw ;” partly from the representation made to him (ch. vi.) and partly from the evidence of the things revealed to him ; which were as clear to his mind as if he had *had* an ocular inspection of them. Now these visions were either *outward representations* of things to their bodily eyes, or *inward representations* to their minds. (1.) There were sometimes appearances of persons, or things, made to their outward senses, in which God employed the ministry of angels.—Thus three men appeared to Abraham (Gen. xviii. 2.) ; one of whom was the Son of God himself ; the other two ministering angels. Of the same kind was the burning bush which Moses saw ; —the man that Joshua saw at the siege of Jericho ; —the seething pot, the almond tree, and basket of figs, seen by Jeremiah, &c. (2.) They were sometimes made only to their mind. When Peter saw the vision of a sheet let down from Heaven, it is said (Acts x. 10.) he was in a trance or ecstasy ; whereby for a season he was deprived of the use of his bodily senses. And to this head I refer Daniel’s and the Apocalyptical visions ; and especially all those visions wherein any representation was made of God himself and his glorious throne ; as in 1 Kin. xxii. 19. Isa. vi. 1. Ezek. i. 3, &c. In all these there was no use of the bodily senses of the prophets ; but their minds were impressed with ideas and representations of things : but this was so effectual, that they understood not but that they

had also made use of their visive faculty. Now these visions were granted to the prophets, to confirm their minds, and affect their hearts with a clear and forcible apprehension of those things which they were to communicate to others ; but it was necessary, in order to render these visions direct parts of divine revelation, that the minds of the prophets should be elevated in a due manner by the Holy Spirit for the reception of them ; and that they should be enabled faithfully to retain, and infallibly to declare, what was so represented to them.

4. Symbolical actions were sometimes enjoined on the prophets. Isaiah was commanded to walk naked and barefoot ; Jeremiah to dispose of a linen girdle ; Ezekiel to lie on his side in the siege. Now some of these things being against the light of nature and the law of God, cannot be supposed to have been actually done, but represented to them in visions, to make the deeper impression on them. As to most other instances, they might be really performed, and not in vision only.

5. Their revelations were accompanied with local mutations, or being transported from one place to another, as Ezekiel was (Ezek. viii. 3, and xi. 24.) ; and it is expressly said, that it was in the visions of God. Falling into a trance, or ecstasy, wherein the exercise of their outward senses was suspended, their minds were carried in a holy rapture from one place to another ; which was effected only by a divine representation of things, which were done in places from whence they were really absent. Now all these belong to the manifold variety of divine revelations, mentioned Heb. i. 10.

The writing of the Scripture was another effect of the Holy Ghost. The Apostle tells us, that "the Scripture, or writing itself (*Ε ΓΡΑΦΗ*) was by inspiration from God." 2 Tim. iii. 16. This ministry was first committed to Moses. There were many prophets before him ; but he was the first who committed the will of God to writing, after God himself, who wrote the law in tables of stone, which was the beginning and

pattern of the Scripture.—The writers of the historical books of the Old Testament are unknown; but it is certain they were of the number of “holy men who spake and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” Hence they are called Prophets; for though they wrote historically, yet it was not from their own memory, nor from tradition, nor from records (though they might be furnished with these); but by the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Three things concurred in this work. 1. The inspiration of the minds of the prophets, with the knowledge of the things communicated to them: 2. The suggestion of words to express the conceptions of their minds: 3. The guidance of their hands in setting down the words suggested. If either of these were wanting, the Scripture could not be absolutely divine and infallible. Some indeed think, from the variety of style observable in the Scriptures, that the substance only was given them; and that the words were left to their own abilities. I shall only say, that this variety arises chiefly from the variety of the subjects treated of; and can give no countenance to the profaneness of this opinion; for the Holy Ghost does not put a force on the minds of men, but acts on them agreeably to their nature and endowments. The words therefore which he suggests are such as are familiar to themselves. We grant, that they used their own abilities in the choice of words; but the Holy Spirit, who is more intimate to the minds of men than they are themselves, so guided them, that the words they fixed on were as certainly from him as if they had been spoken to them by an audible voice; otherwise they could not be said to speak as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; nor could their writing be of divine inspiration. Hence in the original, great senses and significations often depend on a single letter, as in the change of Abram’s name to Abraham; and our Saviour affirms, that every *apex* and *iota* of the law is under the care of God. Matt. v.

The third sort of the extraordinary operations of the Holy Ghost are *miracles*; such as were wrought by

Moses, Joshua, Elijah, Elisha, and others. Now these were all the immediate effects of the divine power of the Holy Ghost; for by miracles we mean such effects as are really beyond and above the power of natural causes, however applied. It is expressly said of Christ himself, that he wrought miracles (casting out devils, for instance) by the Holy Ghost; and if their immediate production was by his power in the human nature of the Son of God, how much more must it be granted, that it was by him alone that they were wrought by mere men; and, therefore, when they are said to be wrought by the *hand* or *finger* of God, it is the Person of the Spirit which is intended; and the persons by whom they were wrought were never the real subjects of the power whereby they were wrought, as though it should reside or be inherent in them (Acts iii. 12, 26.); only they were infallibly directed by the Holy Ghost, by word or action, to pre-signify their operation. Thus, when Joshua commanded the sun and moon to stand still, there was no power in him to influence the whole frame of nature; only he had a divine warrant to speak that which God himself would effect; whence it is said, "God hearkened to the voice of a man."* So in all other miraculous operations,

* Some of the Jewish writers interpret this passage to signify, merely the speed of Joshua in subduing his enemies before the close of the day; and this they do, lest Joshua should be thought to have wrought a greater miracle than Moses. Our author also observes that some Christian writers countenance this fiction. To remove a variety of difficulties which have been started from this remarkable story, the Editor begs leave to transcribe the following elucidation of the matter from Pike's *Philosophia Sacra*, p. 47. "The place now quoted has been constantly brought as an objection against the Scripture's allowing the motion of the earth; and is insisted on as a proof, that the Scriptures assert the motion of the sun round the earth; but I conceive that this mistake arises from quoting the place imperfectly.—'Tis usually said,—Does not Joshua say, "Sun, stand thou still?" and the next words are generally dropped; whereas it runs thus: "Sun, stand thou still in Gibeon; and thou Moon, in the valley of Ajalon." Now I ask, Was the body of the sun in Gibeon, or the body of the moon in the valley of Ajalon? Surely, No: but the light proceeding from the sun, and the light reflected from the moon were both there. Joshua means, not the bodies, but the lights of the sun and moon, which were made to remain for a time in the same situation in Gibeon and Ajalon; and this was effected by a miraculous power, without making any alteration in the bodies of the sun, moon, or earth. The Hebrew words, *SHEMESH* and *YARAH*, mean the light of the sun and moon," &c.

even where the members of the body were instrumental of the miracle, as in the gift of tongues; they who had that gift, did not so speak from any skill residing in them, but they were merely organs of the Holy Ghost, which he moved at his pleasure. The design of all these operations was to confirm their ministry. Thus when God sent Moses to declare his will to Israel, he commands him to work miracles, that they might believe he was sent of God (Exod. iv. 8.); and these were called Signs, because they were tokens of the presence of God; and these are the general heads of the extraordinary operations of the Spirit, exceeding all human or natural abilities.

But besides these, there were other operations of the Spirit, whereby he improved and exalted the natural faculties of men for special purposes: and these have respect to things political, moral, natural, and intellectual.

1. Political gifts were bestowed on persons, whereby they were formed for civil government. Government, among men, is of great concernment to the glory of God and the welfare of society; without it, the whole world would be a scene of violence, wickedness, and confusion. Now all will allow that peculiar abilities are requisite for this purpose. Those who are in authority should diligently cultivate them; or the world and themselves will soon feel the effects of their negligence; but because the utmost of what men may attain by ordinary means, is not sufficient for some special ends which God designed by their government, the Holy Ghost sometimes gave a special improvement to their mental abilities, and which was sometimes manifested by external signs. Thus, when the Sanhedrim was first appointed for the assistance of Moses, "the Lord said, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, and I will take of the Spirit that is upon thee, and put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee; and the Lord took of the Spirit that was on Moses, and gave it to the seventy elders; and the Spirit rested on them." Numb. xi. 16, 17, 25. So when God would erect a new kind of government

among them, and designed Saul to be their king, he gave him "another heart;" being called from a low condition to royal dignity, the Spirit of God endowed him with wisdom and magnanimity fit for his high office; and this was accompanied with a visible token, an extraordinary afflatus, that the people might acquiesce in his appointment. 1 Sam. x. 9. For the same reason he instituted the anointing of kings; for it was a token of the communication of the gifts of the Spirit; and indeed, so great is the burden with which a just and useful government is attended,—so great are the temptations arising from power and riches, that without special assistance, men will either sink under its weight, or miscarry in its management. This made Solomon prefer wisdom (for rule) before every other blessing; and if the rulers of the earth would follow his example, and earnestly pray for the supplies of the Spirit, it would be better with them and the world than it commonly is. God sometimes carried this dispensation beyond the pale of the church; and I doubt not he continues so to do. Thus he anointed Cyrus (Isa. xlv. 1.) who had a great work to do for God; for he was to execute his judgments on Babylon, and to deliver his people; for both these purposes he needed special aid from the Spirit, though in himself he was but a "ravenous bird of prey." Isa. xlv. 11. How many on whom these gifts are bestowed, never consider their Author,—but sacrifice to their own nets, and look on themselves as the springs of all their wisdom and ability! But it is no wonder that all regard to the gifts of the Spirit in the government of the world is despised, when his whole work, as to the church itself, is openly derided.

2. We may add those moral virtues which were granted to some persons for the accomplishment of particular designs. So he came upon Gideon and Jephthah, to qualify them for delivering his people from their enemies. Judges vi. 34, and ix. 29. It is said before of them, that they were "men of valour." This coming of the Spirit upon them, was his special excitation of their courage, and fortifying their minds

against danger ; and this he did by such an efficacious impression of his power, that themselves received a full confirmation of their call, and others might discern the presence of God with them. Hence it is said, "the Spirit of God clothed them ;" they being warmed themselves, and known to others by his gifts.

3. There are several instances of his adding to the gifts of the mind, whereby he qualified persons for their duties, even bodily strength, when that also was needful. Such was his gift to Samson: His bodily strength was supernatural, and therefore when he put it forth, it is said, "the Spirit of the Lord come mightily upon him," or wrought powerfully in him ; and he gave him this strength in the way of an ordinance, appointing the growing of his hair to be the pledge of it ; the care of which being violated, he lost for a season the gift itself. Judges xiv. 6. xv. 14.

4. Intellectual gifts were also communicated to some persons. So he endowed Bezaliel and Aholiab with wisdom and skill in all manner of curious workmanship, for the building and beautifying the tabernacle. Exod. xxxi. 2, 3. Whether Bezaliel had before given himself to the acquisition of those arts is uncertain ; but his present endowments were certainly extraordinary. The Spirit of God improved and strengthened his natural faculties to a perception of those curious works, with skill to contrive and dispose of them according to the order appointed by God himself.

And thus I have briefly passed through the dispensation of the Spirit under the Old Testament, nor have I aimed to gather up his whole work ; for then every thing that is praiseworthy in the church must have been enquired into ; for without him, all is death, and darkness, and sin : but these instances are sufficient to prove that the being and welfare of the church depended solely on his operations. From him was the word of promise, the gift of prophecy, the revelation and institution of all the ordinances of worship ; and all those gifts and abilities which any received for the rule, protection, and deliverance of the church ; and if this was the state of things under the Old Testament, a

judgment may thence be formed how it is under the New ; the principal advantage of which, next to the coming of Christ, is the pouring out of the Spirit in a larger measure than before ;—and yet some men think that neither he nor his work are of any great use to us ; and though we find every thing that is good, even under the Old Testament, assigned to him, it is hard to persuade some persons that he continues now to do any good at all :—so adverse are the thoughts of God and men in these things, where our thoughts are not captivated to the obedience of faith.

CHAPTER II.

General Dispensation of the Holy Spirit, with respect to the New Creation.

WE now proceed to the principal part of our work, the Dispensation of the Spirit with respect to the Gospel, or the New Creation of all things in and by Jesus Christ,—and this demands our most diligent enquiry; nor is there any more important principle in the Christian religion. The doctrine of the being and unity of God is common to us with the rest of mankind: the doctrine of the Trinity was known to all who enjoyed divine revelation, even under the Old Testament: the incarnation of the Son of God was promised and expected from the first entrance of sin: but this dispensation of the Spirit is so peculiar to the New Testament, that the Evangelist, speaking of it, says, “the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified” (John vii. 39); and the disciples of John knew not “whether there were any Holy Ghost” (Acts x. 2): both which sayings respect this his dispensation; for he did not then begin to be, nor were they ignorant of his existence. To stir us up therefore to diligence in this enquiry, I shall propose a few additional considerations.

1. The plentiful effusion of the Spirit, is the great privilege and pre-eminence of the Gospel-church state.

The coming of Christ in the flesh, was the great promise of the Old Testament ; but he was so to come, as to put an end to that whole church-state, wherein his coming was expected ; but this promise of the Spirit was to be the foundation of another church-state, and the means of its continuance. If, therefore, we have any interest in the Gospel itself, let us attend to these things.

2. The ministry of the Gospel, whereby we are begotten again, is, from his promised presence with it and work in it, called the Ministry of the Spirit (2 Cor. iii. 6.) in opposition to "the ministration of the law;" in which, however, there was a multitude of ordinances of worship and glorious ceremonies ; and he who knows no more of the Ministry of the Gospel than what consists in an attendance to the letter of institutions, knows nothing of it. Not that there is any extraordinary inspiration now pretended to by us,—but there is that presence of the Spirit of God with the ministry of the Gospel, in his assistance, communication of gifts and abilities, guidance, and direction, without which it is useless and unprofitable.

3. The promise and gift of the Spirit, under the Gospel, is not granted to any peculiar sort of persons, but to all believers, as their conditions and occasions require. The Papists would confine this promise to their Pope and Councils ; but it is the common concern of all believers in their places and stations ; of all churches in their order ; and of all ministers in their office. It is true that his extraordinary effects, which were necessary for laying the foundation of the church, have ceased ; but the whole work of his grace is no less carried on at this day than it was on the day of Pentecost ; and so is his communication of gifts for the edification of the church. Eph. iv. 10, &c. The owning therefore of the work of the Spirit, is the principal part of that profession to which all believers are called.

4. We are taught to pray that God would give us his Holy Spirit, that through his assistance we may live to God. Our Saviour enjoins an importunity in

our supplications for him, and gives us encouragement that we shall succeed: "Your heavenly Father shall give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him." Luke xi. 9, &c. He, therefore, is the great subject-matter of our prayers; and that signal promise of our Lord, that he would send him as a Comforter to abide with us for ever, is a directory for the prayers of the church in all ages. Nor is there any church in the world fallen under such a total degeneracy, but that in their public offices there are testimonies of their ancient faith and practice, in praying for the Spirit.

5. What was before mentioned must be repeated here, namely, the solemn promise of Jesus Christ just before he left this world; and as he therein confirmed his Testament, he bequeathed his Spirit as his great legacy to his disciples. And this was the great pledge of their future inheritance, which they were to live on in this world. How would some rejoice if they could possess the relic of any thing that belonged to our Saviour, though of no real advantage to them! How many, called Christians, boast of some pretended pieces of his cross! Love, abused by superstition, lies at the bottom of this vanity; they would embrace any thing left them by their dying Saviour; but he has left no such things, nor did he ever bless and sanctify them to sacred purposes. But this is openly testified in the Gospel, that when his heart was overflowing with love for his disciples, when he took a prospect of their condition, and temptation in the world, he promises to give them his Spirit to abide with them for ever. According, therefore, to our valuation of him, is our regard to the love and wisdom of our blessed Saviour to be measured. Indeed it is only in his word and Spirit that we can either honour or despise him; in his own person he is infinitely exalted, so that nothing of ours can affect him; but it is in our regard to these that he tries our faith, love, and obedience.

And if we consider this promise of the Spirit as to the ends of it, we shall find that he is promised as the sole cause and author of all the good that we can enjoy in this world; for there is no good communicated

to us, no consolation bestowed upon us, nor any good in us towards God, but what is effectually wrought by him alone.

The great work whereby God designed to glorify himself in this world, was that of the new creation; which must therefore contain the most perfect revelation of himself; for from this manifestation doth the glory of God arise. Hence is the Lord Christ, in his work of mediation, "the image of the invisible God;" "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his Person;" because in and by him all the glorious properties of the divine nature are displayed, incomparably above what they were in the first creation. Particularly, God has herein revealed himself as Three in One. The glorious mystery of the Holy Trinity is peculiarly displayed in the new creation: not so much by express propositions, as by a declaration of the mutual acts of the divine Persons towards each other, and of their distinct actings towards us. And this, not to fill our minds with notions of God, but to teach us how to place our trust in him, to obey and live to him, and to obtain communion with him, till we come to the enjoyment of him.

In this new creation, three things are proposed to our faith. 1. The supreme design of it, which is absolutely and uniformly assigned to the counsel and grace of the Father. And because the Son undertook to effect what the Father so designed, there were many acts of the Father towards the Son, in sending, giving, appointing him; in preparing him a body, in supporting him, in rewarding, and giving a people to him; which, on account of the authority, love, and wisdom exercised in them, belong to the Father; their actual operation belonging principally to another Person. In these things is the Person of the Father proposed to us to be known and adored.—2. The procuring cause and means of effecting that design are ascribed to the Son; who engages to accomplish in his own Person the whole work appointed for him by the wisdom and counsel of the Father. And in these divine operations is the Person of the Son revealed to us, to be "honoured, even

as we honour the Father." 3. The application of the supreme design, and actual accomplishment of it to make it effectual, is assigned to the Holy Spirit. He performs whatever was to be done in reference to the Person of the Son, or to the sons of men, for the accomplishment of the Father's counsel, and the Son's work, in the special application of both to their proper ends. Hereby he is made known to us, and hereby our faith is directed. And thus in this great work, God causes all his glory to pass before us, that we may know and worship him aright. And what is the peculiar work of the Holy Ghost herein, we shall now declare.

CHAPTER III.

Work of the Holy Spirit with respect to the Human Nature of Christ, the Head of the New Creation.

THE dispensation and work of the Spirit in the New Creation, respect, first, the *Head* of the Church, Jesus Christ; and, secondly, the *Members* of his mystical body. We are therefore, in the first place, to enquire, what are those operations of which the Person of Christ in his human nature was the immediate object?

First. The formation and miraculous conception of the body of Christ in the womb of the blessed Virgin, was the peculiar work of the Holy Ghost. With respect indeed to the designation of it, it is ascribed to the Father by Christ himself: "a body hast thou prepared me;" that is, in the eternal counsel and love of the Father. And as to the voluntary assumption of it, it is ascribed to the Son himself, who, because "the children were partakers of flesh and blood, himself also took part of the same." But the divine efficiency in this matter, was the peculiar work of the Holy Ghost. Matt. i. 18. "When his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to be with child of the Holy Ghost." (Ver. 20.). "That which is conceived in her, is of the Holy Ghost."

Luke i. 35. "The angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee : therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." This act of the Spirit was a creating act ; not indeed like the first creating act, which produced the matter of all things out of nothing ; but like those subsequent acts of creation, whereby out of matter already prepared, things were made what they were not before. So man was formed of the dust of the earth, and woman was also made of a rib taken from man. Thus in forming the body of Christ, though it was effected by an act of infinite power, yet it was made of the substance of the blessed Virgin. And this was necessary, (1.) On account of the first promise, "That the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head;" for the Word was to be "made flesh," and to be "made of a woman." (2.) It was necessary also for the accomplishment of the promises made to Abraham and David ; for the Messiah was to proceed from their loins ; he was to take upon him "the seed of Abraham," and to be made of "the seed of David, according to the flesh." (3.) To confirm this truth, his genealogy, according to the flesh, is given us by two of the evangelists, which were neither true nor to the purpose, if he were not made of the substance of the Virgin. (4.) Besides, all our alliance to him, whence he was meet to be our Saviour, depends on this. For if he had not been partaker of our nature, there would have been no foundation for the imputation of what he did and suffered, to us (Rom. viii. 3.) ; hence these are accounted to us, as they could not be to angels, whose nature he did not assume. Heb. ii. 16. And from hence may be inferred,

1. That Christ could not on this account, even with respect to his human nature, be said to be "the Son of the Holy Ghost;" though he supplied the place of a natural father ; for the relation of filiation arises only from a perfect generation, and not from every effect of an efficient cause. When one fire is kindled by another, we do not say it is the Son of that other :

much less when a man builds a house, do we say it is his son. There was therefore no other relation between the Person of the Spirit and the human nature of Christ, than that of a Creator and a creature.

2. That this act of the Spirit in forming the body of Christ, differs from the act of the Son in assuming the human nature into personal union with himself. The latter was not an act of creation, but of ineffable love and wisdom; taking the nature so prepared for him to be his own in the instant of formation, and thereby preventing the singular and individual subsistence of that nature by itself.

3. Hence also it follows, that the conception of Christ in the womb, being the effect of a creating act, was not accomplished successively and in process of time, but was perfected in an instant. For though creating acts of infinite power may have a process allotted to them (as the world was created in six days) yet each part that was the object of a special creating act, was instantaneously produced. So was the forming the body of Christ, though it increased afterwards in the womb unto the birth. And as it is probable that this conception was immediately on the angelic salutation, so it was necessary that nothing of the human nature of Christ should exist of itself, antecedently to its union with the Son of God; for in the very instant of its formation was the "Word made flesh," and the Son of God was "made of a woman."

It only remains that we consider how the conception of Christ is assigned both to the Holy Ghost, and to the Virgin: "A Virgin shall conceive." Isa. vii. 14. "Thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son." Luke i. 31. And yet in that ancient creed, commonly called the Apostles', it is said "he was conceived of the Holy Ghost," and only "born of the Virgin Mary." We are to observe, that this work is assigned to the Spirit as the efficient cause, who by his power produced the effect; and to the holy Virgin, as the passive material cause; for his body was formed of her substance. And this was after her espousal with Joseph. For (1.) Under the cover of her marriage to

him, she was to receive a protection of her innocence. (2.) God provided one that should take care of her and her child in his infancy :—and hereby, (3.) Was our Saviour freed from the imputation of an illegitimate birth, till by his own miracles he should give testimony to his miraculous conception. (4.) That he might have one, on whose account his genealogy might be recorded, to manifest the accomplishment of the promise to Abraham and David : for the line of genealogy was not legally continued by the mother only. Hence Matthew gives us the genealogy by Joseph, to whom his mother was legally espoused ; and though Luke gives us the true natural line of his descent by the progenitors of the Virgin, yet he names her not, only mentioning her espousals ; he begins with her father Heli. Luke iii. 23.

From this miraculous creation of the body of Christ, it became a meet habitation for his holy soul. We have not only the general depravity of our nature, but the obliquity of our particular constitutions to conflict with. Hence, one is disposed to anger, another to levity, a third to sensuality, and another to sloth. But the body of Christ being perfectly pure, there was no tendency in his constitution to the least deviation from perfect holiness. The exquisite harmony of his natural temperature, made love, meekness, gentleness, patience, benignity, and goodness, natural to him, as having an incapacity of such motions as should have a contrary tendency. Hence also, though he took on him those infirmities which belong to human nature, yet he took none of our particular infirmities, which cleave to us through the vice of our constitutions. Those natural passions of our minds, which are capable of being means of trouble, as grief and sorrow, he took upon him ; and also those infirmities of nature which are troublesome to the body, as hunger, thirst, weariness, and pain ; but as to our bodily diseases and distempers, he was absolutely free from.

Secondly. The human nature of Christ being thus miraculously formed, was sanctified from its conception, and filled with grace according to its capacity.

Being not begotten by natural generation, it derived no taint of original sin from Adam; but was absolutely innocent, as Adam was in the day he was created. Besides, it was positively endowed by the Spirit with all grace: "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots; and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord." Isa. xi. 1, 2, 3. The Spirit's first sanctifying work in the womb, is principally intended in this promise. The soul of Christ, from the first moment of its infusion, was a subject capable of a fulness of grace, as to its habitual residence, though the actual exercise of it was suspended till the organs of the body were fitted for it.

Thirdly. The Spirit carried on this work:—and here we must observe two things: (1.) Christ, as man; exercised all grace by the rational powers of his soul, his understanding, will, and affections; for he acted grace as a man. His divine nature did not supply the place of a human soul, nor did it immediately operate the works he performed; but being a perfect man, his rational soul was the immediate principle of all his moral operations.—In the improvement and exercise of these faculties, he made a progress like other men, accompanied with a progression in grace also. "The child grew" (Luke ii. 40); that is, in bodily stature, "and waxed strong in spirit" (v. 52.) or in the faculties of his mind; he is said to "increase in wisdom and in stature" (v. 47.); he was (PLEROUMENOS SOPHIAS) continually filling and filled with new degrees of wisdom, as the rational faculties of his mind were capable of it; and this growth was the peculiar work of the Holy Ghost. (2.) His human nature was capable of having new objects presented, of which before it had a simple nescience; and this is as inseparable from human nature as such, as weariness or hunger; but is no vice or blamable defect. Ignorance of any thing one ought to know, is a moral defect, and can

never be ascribed to Christ; but as it is merely a nescience of some things, it is only a denial of infinite omniscience, not inconsistent with the highest holiness of human nature.—Hence our Lord says of himself, that he “knew not the day and hour of the end of all things;” and our apostle says of him, that “he learned obedience by suffering.” In the representation of things anew to his human nature, the wisdom of it was objectively increased; and in new trials he learned experimentally the new exercise of grace; and this was the constant work of the Spirit, who dwelt in him “without measure.”

Fourthly. The Holy Spirit anointed him with all those extraordinary powers which were necessary for the discharge of his office. “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives; and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.” Isa. lxi. 1. The prophetic office of Christ is here intended, by which he instructed men in the nature of his other offices. For this work he was fitted by the unction of the Spirit; he received at his baptism the visible pledge which confirmed him in, and testified to others, his calling of God to the office of a prophet. Then “the Spirit descended like a dove, and rested on him; and lo, a voice from Heaven, saying, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Matt. iii. 16, 17. Hereby was the great seal of Heaven put to his commission. John vi. 27. He now entered fully on his public ministry. Before this, he had only occasionally manifested the presence of God with him, as when he filled men with astonishment at his discourse with the doctors in the temple; and though he probably performed many extraordinary actions during his course of a private life, yet he did not receive the fulness of gifts for his work till the time of his baptism. On this “he was full of the Holy Ghost;” he was continually filling before, but now he was “full of the Holy Ghost,” possessed of all that fulness of spiritual gifts which he needed: with respect

to which the Evangelist says, "God giveth not his Spirit by measure to him." John iii. 34. "To every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ; but the Spirit was given to the Lord Christ immeasurably." "It pleased the Father, that in him all fulness should dwell," that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.

Fifthly. It was by the power of the Holy Spirit he wrought those miraculous works whereby his ministry was confirmed. Hence it is said that "Jesus of Nazareth was a man approved of God, by miracles, and wonders, and signs which God did by him." So when he cast out devils, it was by "the finger of God," that is, by the infinite power of God, which was exerted by the Holy Spirit; and therefore, when the Jews ascribed his miracles to Beelzebub, he tells them that they blasphemed the Holy Ghost, whose works they were.

Sixthly. By him he was directed, comforted, and supported in the whole course of his ministry, temptations, obedience, and sufferings. A few instances may suffice. Soon after his baptism, he was "led by the Spirit into the wilderness," to begin his contest with the Devil. Hereby he made an entrance into his ministry. By his assistance he was carried triumphantly through his temptations, and obtained a perfect conquest of his adversary, who endeavoured by all means to oppose and hinder him in his work. The temptation being finished, he returned from the wilderness to preach the gospel "in the power of the Spirit;" and thence, in his first sermon at Nazareth, he took those words of the prophet for his text: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor." And as he thus began his ministry in the power of the Spirit, he continually put forth his wisdom and grace, to the astonishment of all, stopping the mouths of his enemies. By him he was strengthened and comforted in his whole course, from first to last.

Seventhly. He offered himself up to God through the eternal Spirit. Heb. ix. 14. Those who look only

at the outward part of Christ's death can see nothing but suffering in it. The Jews took him, and with the soldiers scourged and slew him; but the principal consideration of it is, his own offering himself a sacrifice to God, to make atonement for sinners; and this he did by the eternal Spirit; wherein we may notice the following instances:—

1. He sanctified, or dedicated himself to God, to be a sacrifice. "For their sakes I sanctify myself." John xvii. 9. He was before this perfectly sanctified as to all inherent holiness, but he now consecrated himself to be a sacrifice, as the victim to be sacrificed of old was first devoted to that purpose. This was his first sacerdotal act; and this he did through the effectual operation of the eternal Spirit.

2. He went voluntarily to the garden, which answered to the bringing of the victim to the door of the tabernacle, according to the law; for there he not only gave himself up into the hands of his enemies, but he also actually entered upon the offering up of himself to God in his agony, when he "offered up prayers and supplications."

3. In all that ensued, he offered himself to God by those actings of the graces of the Holy Spirit in him, which accompanied him to the last; and on these depends the efficacy of his atonement. We may therefore enquire what those graces were.

(1.) Love to mankind. This is frequently expressed where the offering of Christ is mentioned: "Who loved me, and gave himself for me;" and compassion is the first grace required in an High Priest. Love in the holy soul of the Lord Jesus was then in its most inconceivable advancement; and the intenseness of it supported him under all his sufferings. As Jacob, through the greatness of his love to Rachel, made light of seven years service for her, so Christ "endured the cross and despised the shame," for the joy of saving his elect.

(2.) That which principally actuated him in the whole, was his unspeakable affection for the glory of God.—Herein he aimed at (1.) The manifestation of

God's righteousness, holiness, and severity against sin ; to repair the glory of God which seemed to suffer by sin ; to make satisfaction to the justice of God for sin ; to be a propitiation to declare his righteousness ; and he came to do this with full ardour of soul : "Lo, I come," said he ; "I delight to do thy will, O my God ; yea, thy law is in the midst of my bowels ;" and when preparing for suffering, he says, "with desire have I desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer ;" and at another time, "I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I straitened (or pained) till it be accomplished !" (2.) Jesus Christ designed the exercise of his grace and love.—This he knew was the way to open the treasures of grace and love, that they might be poured out on sinners, to the everlasting glory of God. This zeal and affection, which was wrought in the heart of Christ by the eternal Spirit, was that wherein principally he offered himself up to God.

(3.) His holy submission and obedience to the will of God, which were now in the height of their exercise, was another special part of his offering up himself. "He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, the death of the cross ;" and "though he was a Son, yet he learned obedience by the things that he suffered:" that is, he experienced obedience in suffering. It is true, he had always yielded obedience to God ; but now he came to the great trial of it, with respect to that special command of the Father, "to lay down his life." This was the highest possible act of obedience ; and therefore God expressed the greatest satisfaction in it. This holy submission was wrought in him by the eternal Spirit, and therefore "by him," he offered himself to God.

(4.) To this also belongs that faith which he now acted on God and his promises ; and this respected (1.) Himself ; that he should be supported, and carried through his work to a blessed issue : "I will put my trust in him." Heb. ii. 13. Herein, indeed, he was horribly assaulted, till he cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" But after all, his faith was victorious. Psal. xxii. 9—11. (2.) This

faith of his respected the Covenant. The blood that he now shed was the blood of the Covenant; and it was shed for the Church, that the blessings of the covenant might be communicated to them, with respect to which he exercised faith, as fully appears from his prayer. John xvii.

These gracious actings of the soul of Christ were the means whereby in his death, which was violent as to the instruments of it, and penal as to the sentence of the law, he voluntarily offered himself up as a sacrifice for sin; and these were the things which, from the dignity of his Person, became efficacious and victorious; and without them his death had been no oblation. These rendered his offering a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour to God.—God was so absolutely delighted with these glorious acts of grace and obedience, that he “smelt a savour of rest” towards mankind. He was more pleased with the obedience of Christ than he was displeased with the sin of Adam.

Eighthly. There was a peculiar work of the Spirit towards Christ while he was in the state of the dead. His holy Spirit he committed into the hands of his Father, who had engaged to preserve him in death, and to shew him again “the path of life.” His holy body in the grave continued under the special care of the Spirit of God; and hereby that great promise was accomplished, “that his soul should not be left in Hell (the unseen state) nor the Holy One see corruption.” It is the *body* of Christ that is here called *the Holy One*; it was made an holy thing by the conception of it in the womb by the power of the Holy Ghost; and is distinguished from his soul; and opposed by Peter (Acts ii. 29.) to the dead body of David, “which saw corruption.” This holy substance was preserved in its integrity by the power of the Spirit, without any of those accidents of change which attend the dead bodies of others.

Ninthly. There was a peculiar work of the Holy Spirit in his resurrection; he was put to death in the flesh, “but quickened in the Spirit,” restored to life by the Spirit. 1 Pet. iii. 18, &c. To the same pur-

pose we are instructed by our apostle: "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies." Rom. viii. 11. And in another place he prays that, by the work of the Spirit in the Ephesians, they might experience the greatness of that power which he exerted in raising Christ from the dead. Eph. i. 17. And the evidence given to his being the Son of God by his resurrection, is said to be "according to the Spirit of holiness," or the Holy Spirit. Rom. i. 4. This also is the meaning of that expression, "Justified in the Spirit." 1 Tim. iii. 16. God was manifest in the flesh, by his incarnation; and justified in the Spirit, by a declaration of his acquittal from the sentence of death, by his resurrection from the dead, through the mighty working of the Spirit of God.

Tenthly. The Holy Spirit glorified the Human nature, and made it every way meet for its eternal residence at the right hand of God, and a pattern of the glorification of the bodies of all believers. He who first made his nature holy, now made it glorious: and as we are made conformable to him in our souls here, so he is, in his glorified body, the pattern of that glory which in our mortal bodies we shall receive by the same Spirit. Phil. iii. 21.

There is yet another work of the Spirit, not immediately on the Person of Christ, but on his behalf; and this is his witness-bearing to him that he is the Son of God. It is well known how our Lord was reproached in this world; and how ignominiously he was sent out of it by death. Hence a great contest ensued, in which Hell and Heaven were deeply engaged. The world in general affirmed that he was an impostor, justly punished for his evil deeds: he, on the other side, chose twelve apostles to testify the holiness of his life, the purity of his doctrine, and the accomplishment of the prophecies concerning him: but how could the testimony of twelve poor, though honest men, prevail against the confronting suffrage of the world? Wherefore this work of bearing witness to Christ, was com-

mitted to Him, who is above all, and who is able to make his testimony prevalent ; “ but when the Comforter is come, he shall testify of me.” John xv. 26. Accordingly the apostles plead his concurring testimony :—“ We are his witnesses, and so also is the Holy Spirit ;” and the manner of his bearing witness was, “ with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts.” The great design of which was to bear witness to the Person of Jesus, that he was indeed the Son of God ; owned and exalted by him ; and thus, together with the effectual power which accompanied the gospel, the generality of mankind were subdued to the obedience of the faith.

By these considerations we may be led into that knowledge of Jesus Christ which is so necessary, so useful, and so much recommended to us in the Scripture ; and the utter neglect of this knowledge is not more pernicious to the souls of men than the learning of it by undue means, such as the use of images among the Papists ; for, besides that they are forbidden of God for any such purposes, and cursed with barrenness as to any useful ends,—they are in themselves suited only to ingenerate low and carnal thoughts in superstitious minds. This is at best to know Christ only “ after the flesh ;” but the glory of his human nature consists alone in these eminent, peculiar, ineffable communications of the Spirit of God to him, and his powerful operations in him. This is represented in the glass of the Gospel, which we, beholding by faith, are changed into the same image by the same Spirit.

But the considerations we have insisted on, if duly regarded, will guide us into a spiritual knowledge of Christ ; and we are thus to know him :—(1.) That we may love him with a pure unmixed love. It is true that the Person of Christ, as God-man, is the proper and ultimate object of our love : but a distinct consideration of his natures and their excellencies, is effectual to draw forth our love towards him. “ He is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand ;” that is, perfect in the beauty of the graces of the Holy Spirit, which render him exceedingly amiable. Would

you therefore propose Christ to your affections, so that your love may be sincere, and not lavished away on a false object, the creature of your own imaginations?—consider what has been said concerning him:—the blessed union of his two natures in the same person,—the uncreated glories of his divine nature,—and the perfection of grace which dwelt in his human nature; and if you can and do delight in him, and love him on these accounts, your love is genuine and spiritual. (2.) We are to know Christ, so as to labour after conformity to him; and this conformity consists in a participation of the graces, whose fulness dwells in him; and we cannot regularly press after this, but by an acquaintance with the work of the Spirit on his human nature; and thus we have given a brief delineation of the dispensation of the Holy Spirit in and towards the Person of Christ, the Head of the Church: his preparation of a mystical body for him, in his gracious operations on the elect of God, must be next considered.

CHAPTER IV.

The General Work of the Spirit with respect to the Members of that Body whereof Christ is the Head.

WE have considered the work of the Spirit in laying the foundation of the New Testament Church, by his dispensations towards Christ, the Head of it. He is the *foundation-stone* of this building, with *seven eyes* engraven on him, or filled with an absolute perfection of all the gifts and graces of the Spirit. Zech. iii. 9. The same hand that laid this foundation doth also finish the building. The same Spirit which was given to him, “not by measure,” giveth grace to every one of us, “according to the measure of the gift of Christ.” He who prepared, sanctified, and glorified the human nature of the Head of the Church, has undertaken to prepare, sanctify, and glorify his mystical body, or

all the elect given to him by the Father. Concerning which, the following things may be premised :—

1. This work of the Spirit being not an original, but a perfecting work, it supposes the love, grace, and eternal purpose of the Father, and the whole mediation of Jesus Christ ; for it is his peculiar work to make these effectual to the souls of the elect, to the praise of the glory of the grace of God. In the first creation, God seemed chiefly to intend to glorify the essential properties of his nature, his power, goodness, and wisdom ;—but in the new creation, God intends the special revelation of each Person distinctly, in his peculiar operations ; a full discovery of the economy of the Holy Trinity, with superior light to what was afforded under the Old Testament. We find in the saints of old, vigorous actings of faith in their approaches to God ; but as to a clear access to the Father,—through the Son,—by the Spirit (Eph. ii. 18.) (wherein the life of our communion with God consists) we hear nothing of it. Herein, therefore, God plainly declares, That the foundation of the whole was laid in the counsel of the Father ; the accomplishment of that counsel is by the mediation of the Son ; God intending that all men should honour him, even as they honour the Father ; and the actual application of all to the souls of men is by the Spirit, that they may be partakers of the grace designed in the counsel of the Father, and prepared in the mediation of the Son ; and herein is the Holy Ghost to be glorified, that he, together with the Father and Son, may be known, adored, and worshipped.

2. From the nature and order of this work of God, it is that, after the Son was actually incarnate, and had fulfilled what he had undertaken to do in his own Person, the great promise of finishing the work of salvation concerns the sending the Holy Spirit to perform what he also had undertaken. When our Lord had ascended into Heaven, the apostle Peter tells us, that “being exalted by the right hand of God, he received the promise of the Holy Ghost ;” that is, he received the thing promised. The promise itself was not then first given to him, for he received it in the

covenant, when he undertook the redemption of man ; nor did he receive it for himself, for he had the fulness of the Spirit from his incarnation ; but he received the blessing promised, that he might pour forth his Spirit on his disciples, as the apostle speaks :—" Having received the promise,—he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear," that is, in his miraculous operations and effects.

Here lay the foundation of the Christian church. The Lord Christ had called his apostles to the great work of building his church, and propagating his Gospel in the world ; for which, in themselves, they were evidently defective in all needful qualifications ; but whatever was wanting in wisdom, utterance, or courage, he promised to supply ; and this he would do only by the Holy Ghost ; on whose assistance the whole success of their ministry depended. Hence, when he was about to leave them after his resurrection, he ordered them to sit still and do nothing in the public work of building his church, till the promise of the Spirit were actually accomplished. " He commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father"—" Ye shall receive power after the Holy Spirit is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the utmost parts of the earth." Acts i. 4. 8. In this promise he founded the church itself, and by it he builded it up ; and this is the hinge on which the whole weight of it turns to this day. Take this away, and there is an end of the church of Christ :—no dispensation of the Spirit, no church. He that would utterly separate the Spirit from the word, had as good burn his Bible. The bare letter of the New Testament will no more produce faith and obedience in the souls of men, than the letter of the Old Testament does among the Jews : but, blessed be God, who has knit these things together in the bond of an everlasting covenant ! The kingdom of Christ is spiritual, and, in the animating principles of it, invisible. If we fix our minds only on outward order, we lose the rise and power of the whole. It is not an outward visible ordination by

men (though that be necessary also) but Christ's communication of his Spirit that gives being, life, and success to the ministry; and if any are so foolish as to expect assistance in the work without him, or such success in their labours as shall find acceptance with God, they do but deceive their own souls and others. Let men, therefore, cast themselves into what order, or institute what forms of worship they think proper; if the work of the Spirit be disclaimed, there is no church state among them.

3. It is the Holy Spirit who supplies the bodily absence of Christ. Hence some of the ancients call him (*Vicarium Christi*) *the Vicar of Christ*; he who represents his Person, and discharges his promised work. When Christ was leaving the world, he commanded his disciples to preach the Gospel and disciple the world; and for their encouragement promised his own presence with them; and that while his Gospel should be preached on the earth:—"Lo! I am with you always, even to the end of the world," or the consummation of all things; but immediately after he had thus spoken, "he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight." Where now is the accomplishment of this promise? or, of that other made to the church itself,—“Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them?” I answer, These promises are perfectly fulfilled by his sending the Holy Spirit; in and by him, he is present with his disciples in their ministry and their assemblies. He so represents the Person, and supplies the bodily absence of Christ, that on his presence the being of the church, the success of the ministry, and the edification of the whole absolutely depend. Now, who that has any affection for Christ, does not think that the bodily presence of Christ would be of unspeakable advantage to him?—and so no doubt it would, had any such thing been appointed in the wisdom and love of God; but so it is not; and we are taught to expect more advantage by his spiritual presence with us by the Holy Ghost; it is more expedient for us. It is therefore incumbent on us to enquire what valuation we have

hereof, and what benefit we have hereby; for if we do not really receive grace from this presence of Christ with us, we have no benefit at all from him; for he is not with any now, but by his Spirit; and this they will one day find, whose profession is made up of such a sottish contradiction, as to avow an esteem of Jesus Christ, and yet blaspheme his Spirit in all his holy operations.

4. As he represents the person, and supplies the place of Christ, so he effects whatever Christ undertook to effect; for as the work of the Son was not his own, but rather the work of the Father who sent him, —so the work of the Spirit is not his own, but rather the work of the Son, by whom he is sent. “When the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all truth.” John xvi. 13—15. He comes to communicate truth; not an absolutely new dispensation of truth, different from what Christ himself had declared, but to build on the foundation he had laid. By this rule we may try every spirit whether it be of God. That spirit which pretends to reveal any thing that is contrary to, or not consistent with, yea, that is not already revealed in the word; that brings any thing new, his own, or of himself, that spirit is not of God. “He shall not speak of himself,” —not of himself only; he shall reveal no other truth, communicate no other grace, but what is in, from, and by Christ. It is added, “whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak;” that is, the whole counsel of the Father and the Son concerning the salvation of the Church; and he is said to “hear it,” not as if he were not a divine Person, equally participant of the counsels of the Father and the Son; but the outward act of hearing is mentioned as the *sign* of his infinite knowledge, not the *means* of it. His great work is subjoined, “He shall glorify me;” and this they are always to remember who pray for his assistance in their office in the Church: he is given to them, that they may give glory to Christ; and the method whereby the Spirit glorifies Christ is added: “He shall receive of mine, and shew it unto you.” The (ΤΑ ΕΜΑ) things of Christ, are his

“truth and grace;” these he is said to receive; not as if he had them not before, but because they are peculiarly the things of Christ; and it is added, “He shall shew them to you.” He shewed the apostles his truth, by immediate revelation; enabling them infallibly to understand and declare the whole counsel of God; and he still continues to shew to all believers the truth of Christ by the word, as written and preached; instructing us in it, and enlightening our minds spiritually to understand the mind of God in it; and his grace he shewed, by pouring out his sanctifying graces and extraordinary gifts upon the first disciples; and he still continues to shew his grace to believers, as he imparts it to them in sanctification, consolation, and spiritual gifts. The reason of this assertion is then given us: “All things that the Father hath are mine; therefore, said I, that he shall take of mine, and shew it unto you.” The things to be declared to us and bestowed on us, are originally the Father’s things: he is the peculiar Fountain of them all; his love, wisdom, goodness, counsel, and will, is their supreme cause and spring. They are made the things of the Son, on account of his mediation; for thereby they were to be prepared for us, and given out to us; and then they are actually communicated to us by the Holy Ghost:—“He shall take of mine, and shew it unto you.” He does not communicate them to us immediately from the Father. We do not so receive any grace from him, nor make any return of praise to him. We have nothing to do with the Father immediately. By the Son alone we have access to him; and by the Son alone he gives out his grace to us. With him, as the great Treasurer of heavenly things, are all grace and mercy intrusted. The Holy Spirit, therefore, bestows them on us, as they are the fruits of the mediation of Christ, and not merely as the effects of the divine bounty of the Father. Thus he supplies the bodily absence of Jesus Christ, and effects what he has to accomplish in the world; so that whatever is done by him, it is the same as if it were wrought immediately

by Christ himself in his own Person ; and thus are his promises accomplished to believers.

And this teaches us the way and manner of our communion with God by the Gospel. The Person of the Father is the origin of all grace and glory ; but it is not immediately from him that they are communicated to us. It is the Son whom he loves, and hath given all things into his hand. He has made a way for their communication to us ; and he does it immediately by the Spirit. As the descending of God towards us, in love and grace, issues in the work of the Spirit on us, so all our ascending towards him begins therein ; and we must attend explicitly to these things, if we wish our faith, love, and obedience should be evangelical. Woe to professors of the Gospel who are seduced to believe that all they have to do with God consists in their attention to moral virtue ! It is sottish ignorance and infidelity to suppose that, under the Gospel, there is no communication between God and us but by laws, commands, and promises on his part ; and by obedience performed in our own strength on our part. Let them judge thus who, being weary of Christianity, have a mind to turn Pagans ; but our "fellowship is with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ," by the Spirit. It is therefore of the first importance to us to enquire into, and secure to ourselves, the promised influences of the Holy Ghost.

5. As the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of grace, and the immediate efficient cause of all gracious effects in men, wherever there is mention made of any one of them, it is to be looked on as a part of his work, though he be not expressly named. I do not understand what some begin to talk about moral virtue ; they seem to aim at something that is in their own power, at least with a blessing on their endeavours ; but as to grace, I think all men will grant that it is of the Holy Ghost alone. Whether we understand by grace, the free favour of God towards us, or his free effectual operations in us, the Holy Spirit is its Author, in the first sense, as to its application ; in the latter, as to the operation itself. This, therefore, must be taken for granted, That wher-

ever any gracious actings of God towards men are mentioned, the Holy Spirit is principally intended.

6. It must be duly considered, that whatever the Holy Spirit does, he does it according to his own will: and several things of great moment depend on this. (1.) The will and pleasure of the Holy Spirit is in all the grace that he communicates to us. He is not a mere instrument or servant, disposing of what he has no concern in nor power over; but in all things he works according to his own will. We ought therefore to acknowledge his love and kindness in what we receive from him, no less than those of the Father and of the Son. (2.) He does not work as a natural agent to the utmost of his power, or as though in all his operations he did what he could; for he manages all his works by his will and wisdom; and therefore when some are said to "resist the Holy Spirit," it is not to be understood that they can do so absolutely, but only as to some way, kind, or degree of his operations. Men may resist the means he employs, but they cannot resist him as to the end he designs; for he is God, and "who hath resisted his will?" We must therefore consider what the means he employs tend to in their own nature, and what he intends by the use of them. The first may be resisted and frustrated; the latter cannot. Sometimes, by that word which in its own nature tends to the conversion of sinners, he intends only their hardening (Isa. vi. 9, 10); and he can, when he pleases, exert such power and efficacy as shall take away all resistance. As to the dispensation of the word, men may resist him, and reject his counsel against themselves; but when he exerts his power in and by the word, to the creation of a new heart and the opening of blind eyes, he so removes the principle of resistance, that he cannot be resisted. (3.) Hence also it follows, that his works may be of various kinds, and in various degrees. Some of the works of the Spirit are perfect in their kind, and men may be made partakers of the whole intention of them, and yet no saving grace be wrought in them. Such are his works of illumination, conviction, &c. Persons may have a work of the Spirit

on their minds, and yet not be sanctified and converted to God; and thus also, where he works the same effect in the souls of men, as in their regeneration, he does it by various means, and carries it on in various degrees, as to the strengthening its principle and the increase of its fruits of holiness; and hence is that great difference as to light, holiness, and fruitfulness, which we find among believers. The Holy Spirit works in all these according to his own will; by no other rule than his own infinite wisdom.

But it may be said, If all graces in us are ascribed to the Holy Spirit, then there is no need to use our own endeavours, or take any pains about the growth of holiness, or the duties of obedience. To what purpose then are all the commands, threatenings, and exhortations of the Scripture? I answer,—

1. Let men imagine what consequences they please, yet that the Spirit of God is the Author of all that is spiritually good in us, is a truth that we must not forego, unless we intend to part with our Bibles also; for in them we are taught, “that in us (that is, in our flesh) there dwelleth no good thing;” that we are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; “but our sufficiency is of God,” “who is able to make all grace to abound towards us.” To grant that there is any spiritual good in us which is not wrought in us by the Spirit of God, is to overthrow the grace of the Gospel. It is therefore certain, that nothing can be inferred from hence but what is good and useful to the souls of men; for from truth nothing else can follow.

2. It is brutish ignorance in any to argue, from the effectual operations of the Spirit, that we may be slothful in our own duty. He who knows not that God has promised to work in us, in a way of grace, what he requires from us in a way of duty, has either never read his Bible, or does not believe it; or never prayed, or never took notice of what he prayed for. He is a heathen, not a Christian, who does not pray that God would work in him what he requires of him. This we know, that what God prescribes, we ought with all

diligence and earnestness to comply with ; and we know too, that whatever God has promised, that he himself will perform in us : it is our duty to believe that he will do so ; and to fancy an inconsistency between these things, is to charge God foolishly.

3. If there be an opposition between these things, it is either because the nature of man is not meet to be commanded, or because it need not be assisted ; both which suppositions are vain and false. The Holy Spirit so worketh in us, as that he worketh by us ; and what he does in us, is done by us :—our duty is to apply ourselves to his commands ; and it is his work to enable us to perform them.

4. He who can indulge negligence on account of the promised assistance of the Spirit, may look upon it as a certain evidence that he has no interest in it ; for where he affords his aids, he, in general, prepares the soul by diligence in duty : and as he works only in and by the faculties of our own minds, it is ridiculous, and implies a contradiction, for a man to say he will do nothing because the Spirit does all ; for where he does nothing, the Spirit does nothing, except by the infusion of the first habit or principle of grace ; of which we shall treat hereafter.

5. As to degrees of grace, they are peculiar to believers ; who are furnished with an ability to perform those duties on which the increase of holiness usually depends ;—for though there is no grace, nor degree of grace, in believers, but what is wrought in them by the Spirit, yet generally the increase and growth of grace depend on the use and improvement of grace received, in a diligent attention to all those duties of obedience which are required of us :—and methinks it is the most unreasonable thing in the world for a man to be slothful in religious duties (on which his spiritual growth depends ; which the eternal welfare of his soul is concerned in) on pretence of the efficacious aids of the Spirit, without which he can do nothing, and which he neither has, nor can have, while he does nothing.

Here then is the ground of our exercising faith to—

wards him in particular, and of our acting it in prayer and praise. His divine nature is the formal reason of our yielding religious worship to him ; but his acting towards us according to the sovereignty of his own will, is the special reason of our particular addresses to him ; for we are baptized in his name also.

All these things are necessarily premised, as giving some insight into the nature of his operations ; and thus we have made our way plain to the consideration of his special works in the calling, building, and carrying on the Church to perfection.

BOOK III.

WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE NEW CREATION, BY REGENERATION.

CHAPTER I.

The New Creation completed....Regeneration the Special Work of the Holy Ghost.

WE have already declared the work of the Holy Spirit in forming the natural body of Christ. This was the beginning of the new creation,—the foundation of the Gospel state : but this was not the whole of what he had to do :—he was to prepare his mystical body also, and thereby to complete the new creation. As it was in the old creation, so it is in the new. All things in their first production had darkness and death upon them;—there was nothing that had either life in it, or principle of life, or any disposition to it. In this condition he moved on the prepared matter, communicating to all things a principle of life, whereby they were animated. Thus also in the new creation :—there was a spiritual darkness and death on all mankind by sin ; there was not the least principle of spiritual life in any man living, nor the least disposition towards it. In this state of things, the Holy Spirit undertakes to create a new world, new heavens, and a new earth, wherein Righteousness should dwell ; and this he begins by the communication of a principle of spiritual life to the souls of the elect, who are the matter designed of God for this work to be wrought upon. This he performs in their regeneration, as we shall now shew.

First. Regeneration is in Scripture always ascribed to the Holy Spirit. “ Jesus said to Nicodemus, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old ? can

he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit." John iii. 3, 4, 5, 6. It was an ancient intelligent teacher of the church of the Jews whom our blessed Saviour here instructs; for on the consideration of his miracles, he concluded that "God was with him;" and came to enquire of him about the kingdom of God.—Our Saviour, knowing that all our faith, obedience, and acceptance depend on our regeneration, acquaints him with the necessity of it; at which he is at first surprised. Our Lord then instructs him in the nature of it; and this he describes both by its cause and its effect. As to its cause, he tells him, it is wrought by water and the Spirit; by the Spirit, as the principal efficient cause; and by water, as the token of it, in the initial seal of the covenant: the doctrine of which was then preached among them by John the Baptist; or rather, the same thing is intended in a redoubled expression; the Spirit being signified by the water also, under which notion he is often promised.

Of this work, then, the Holy Spirit is the efficient cause: hence he, in whom it is wrought, is said to be "born of the Spirit" (ver. 8.); and to the same purpose is chap. i. 13. "Who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." The natural and carnal means of blood, flesh, and the will of man, are wholly rejected in this matter; and the whole efficiency of the new birth is ascribed to God alone. For these things are here compared; and from its analogy to natural generation, it is called Regeneration. The same allusion and opposition is expressed, (ver. 6.) "that which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit;" a new spiritual being, creature, or life. It is elsewhere called a Vivification, or quickening, with respect to the state in which men are before this.

work is wrought upon them (Eph. ii. 1, 5.); and it is "The Spirit that quickeneth." John vi. 63.

The same truth is asserted in Titus iii. 4, 5, 6. "But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared; not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour." What we have frequently mentioned, expressly occurs here, namely, each Person of the blessed Trinity acting distinctly in the work of our salvation. The spring of the whole is, the kindness and love of God, even the Father; the procuring cause of the application of that love and kindness to us, is Jesus Christ our Saviour, in his whole mediation; and the immediate efficient cause in the communication of the Father's love, through the Son's mediation, is the Holy Spirit; and this he effects in the renovation of our natures, by the washing of regeneration, wherein we are purged from our sins, and sanctified to God.

This great truth, that the Holy Spirit is the Author of our regeneration, is, in words at least, generally granted by all who pretend to sobriety in Christianity. That it has been derided and exploded by some others, is the occasion of this vindication of it. It must not be expected that I should here handle the whole doctrine of regeneration practically; it has been already done by others; my present aim is only to confirm the fundamental principles of truth concerning those operations of the Spirit, which are now so violently opposed:—and what I shall offer on this subject may be reduced to the following heads:—

1. Though the work of regeneration was wrought in some persons from the foundation of the world, and the doctrine of it recorded in the Old Testament,—yet the revelation of it was but obscure, compared with the light and evidence with which it appears by the Gospel. This is evident from the discourse of Christ with Nicodemus: for when he mentioned the doctrine to him, he was surprised, and with some amazement

cried, "How can these things be?" But the reply of our Saviour shews, that he might have attained a better acquaintance with it from the Scripture. "Art thou," said he, "a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?" Dost thou take upon thee to teach others what is their state and their duty, and art thyself ignorant of so great and fundamental a doctrine, which thou mightest have learned from the Scripture? For if he might not have done so, there would have been no just cause of reproof; it was no crime to be ignorant of what God had not revealed. This doctrine then, was contained in the Old Testament; it was so in the promises, that God would circumcise the hearts of his people—that he would take away their heart of stone, and give them a heart of flesh; and in various other ways.

But yet we see it was so obscurely declared, that one of the principal teachers of the people knew little or nothing of it. Some indeed tell us, that it means only reformation of life; but Nicodemus knew the necessity of reformation of life well enough, if he had ever read Moses and the Prophets;—and to suppose that our Lord proposed to him what he perfectly knew, only under a new name that he never heard of before, and then took the advantage of charging him with ignorance, is a blasphemous imagination: and how they can free themselves from the guilt of it, who look on regeneration only as a metaphorical expression of amendment of life, I know not; and if it be nothing more than becoming a new moral man, as they love to speak; a thing which all the world, Jews and Gentiles, understood, then Christ was so far from throwing clearer light upon it by what he taught of regeneration, that he threw it into greater obscurity than it was ever delivered in by Jewish masters or Gentile philosophy; for though the Gospel teaches all the duties of morality with more exactness, and urges the practice of them, on motives incomparably superior to any known before, yet, if it intend nothing more by the new birth than the practice of moral duties, it is dark and unintelligible. If there be not a work of the

Spirit on the souls of men intended in the writings of the New Testament, but only a reformation of life, then they must be allowed to be more obscure than any other writings whatsoever; as some have dared already to publish to the world, concerning the epistles of Paul;* but so long as we can obtain an acknowledgment from men that they are true, and in any sense the word of God, we doubt not to evince that the things intended in them are clearly and properly expressed.

Both regeneration and the doctrine of it were under the Old Testament. All the elect of God in their several generations were regenerated by the Spirit of God; but in that enlargement of truth and grace under the Gospel, which came by Jesus Christ, as more persons than of old were made partakers of it, so the nature of the work itself is far more clearly and distinctly revealed:—and because this is the great internal remedy of our diseased nature, which the Physician of Souls came to cure, one of the first things he preached was the doctrine of it. He laid bare the wound of our nature, and shewed the ruin it exposed us to, that we might know, and be thankful for its reparation. Hence no doctrine is more fully and plainly declared in the Gospel; and it is a sad fruit of the depravity of our nature, that against the full light and evidence of truth, this great and holy work is despised and opposed.

Secondly. Regeneration is the same work, for the kind of it, and wrought by the same power of the Spirit in all that are regenerate, or ever were, or shall be so, from the beginning to the end of the world. There is indeed great variety in the application of outward means employed in it; nor can the method used be re-

* But what would our worthy author have said to the riper blasphemies and more consummate impudence of some in the present day? A dignitary of the church, when pressed hard with some arguments of the apostle Paul, is affirmed to have said, with no little warmth, "It had been better for the church if St. Paul had never written a line of his epistles." And a well-known philosophical divine has dared to charge our apostle with false and inconclusive reasoning! Should we now wonder if Jesus Christ himself should be charged with mistake, or even with sin? [Ed.]

duced to any certain order; but generally, God makes use of the preached word; thence called "the incorruptible seed." Sometimes it is wrought without it; as in the case of infants. Sometimes men are called in an extraordinary manner, as Paul was; but mostly by the use of ordinary means, instituted and sanctified of God to that end and purpose.

There is also great variety in the perception of the work itself, by those in whom it is wrought; for in itself it is secret and hidden, and discoverable only by its effects. John iii. 8. In the minds and consciences of some, this is made known by infallible tokens and signs. Paul knew that Christ was "revealed" and "formed" in himself. So he declares that "whoever is in Christ Jesus is a new creature;" that is, born again; whether they know themselves to be so or not; and many are in the dark as to their own condition all their days; they "fear the Lord, and obey the voice of his servant," yet "walk in darkness, and have no light."

And there is great variety in the growth of the new creature, or in the carrying on of this work towards perfection. Some make a great and speedy progress; others thrive slowly, and bring forth little fruit; but yet the work itself, in its own nature, is one and the same. The elect of God under the Old Testament were not regenerate one way, and those under the New Testament another. Those who were miraculously converted, as Paul; or who received miraculous gifts upon their conversion, as multitudes of the primitive Christians did, were no otherwise regenerate than believers at this day are. Those miraculous operations of the Spirit were no part of the work of regeneration; for many were the subjects of them, who were never regenerate; and many were regenerate, who never partook of them; and it is a fruit of the highest ignorance imaginable, to affirm that in regeneration the Holy Spirit wrought of old miraculously, but now only in a rational way, leading our understanding by the rules of reason; for all whoever were regenerate, became so by the same effect of the Holy Spirit on their souls.

This will be more evident, if we consider, 1. That the condition of all men, as unregenerate, is absolutely the same; one man is not more unregenerate than another. There are different degrees of wickedness in the unregenerate; but there is no difference in their state. They are all alike alienated from God, and all alike under his curse. Now, it must be the same work, as to the nature of it, which relieves men from this condition, and translates them from death unto life. 2. The state into which men are brought by regeneration is the same. Nor is it capable of degrees, so that one should be more regenerate than another. Every one that is born of God is equally so, though one may be more beautiful than another, as having the image of his heavenly Father more evidently impressed on him, though not more truly. Men may be more or less holy; more or less sanctified; but they cannot be more or less regenerate. 2. The efficient cause of this work, the grace and power whereby it is wrought, with the internal manner of the communication of that grace, are the same.—To this standard then all must come. Men may bear themselves high, and despise this work of the Spirit, or set up an imagination of their own in its stead; but whether they will or not, they must be tried by it; and no less depends on their interest in it, than their admission into the kingdom of God; and let them pretend what they please, the true reason why any despise the new birth, is because they hate a new life. He who cannot endure to live to God, will as little endure to hear of being born of God; but we shall by the Scripture enquire what we are taught concerning it, and declare both what it is not, of things which falsely pretend to it; and then, what it really is.

First. Regeneration does not consist in a participation of the ordinance of baptism. This is all that some will allow to it, to the utter rejection of the grace of Christ.—The vanity of this presumptuous folly, invented to countenance men in their sins, and to hide from them the necessity of being born again, and therein of turning to God, will be exposed hereafter; for the

present, the following reasons will serve to remove it out of our way.

Regeneration does not consist in those things which are only outward signs of it; or at most, instituted means of effecting it; for the nature of things is distinct from the means and pledges of them, such as baptism is. The apostle Peter states this case (1 Pet. iii. 21.): "In answer whereunto even baptism doth also now save us; not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." The outward administration of this ordinance considered materially, extends only to the washing away the filth of the flesh; but it signifies the answer of a good conscience;—a conscience purged from sin, and quickened by virtue of the resurrection of Christ to holy obedience. The apostle Paul also plainly distinguishes between the outward ordinances and regeneration: "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." Gal. vi. 15. By circumcision, he intends the whole system of Mosaical ordinances; and by uncircumcision, the participation of all gospel ordinances among the professing Gentiles; but from them all he distinguishes the new creation; as that which they may be without; and being so, are not available to salvation. Again: If baptism were regeneration, then all baptized persons must of necessity be regenerate: but this we know to be otherwise. For instance, Simon the magician was baptized by Philip the Evangelist, yet he was not regenerate; for it is said of him, "he had no part or lot in the matter, his heart not being right in the sight of God; but was in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity;" which surely is not the description of a person newly regenerate.

Secondly. Regeneration does not consist in a moral reformation of life. Let us suppose such a reformation to be extensive to all known instances. Suppose a man to be changed from sensuality to temperance, from rapine to righteousness, from pride and passion to humility and moderation. Suppose this change to

be accurate according to the rules of the strictest moralists; suppose it also to be brought about by the preaching of the Gospel; yet all this, and all this added to baptism, and accompanied with a profession of faith and repentance, is not regeneration, nor do they comprise it in them.

But we must stop awhile. This assertion of ours is not only denied, but derided by some; and whoever maintains it, is called an enemy of morality and virtue. —Whether we oppose and exclude morality by this doctrine, or by any other, Christ will hereafter judge and declare; and, were the confession of truth consistent with their interest, the decision of this doubt might be referred to their own consciences; but, not being free to commit any thing to that tribunal, unless we had better security of its freedom from corrupt principles and prejudices than we have, we shall at present leave the world to judge of our doctrine by the fruits of it, compared with theirs, by whom it is denied. In the mean time, we affirm that we design nothing in virtue and morality, but to improve them by fixing them on a proper foundation, or ingrafting them into that stock whereon alone they can thrive, and grow to the glory of God and the good of men; nor shall we be moved in this design by the clamours or calumnies of ignorant or profligate persons; and as to the assertion laid down, let those who despise and reproach it, attempt an answer to the ensuing arguments, before they are too confident of success.

If there be in regeneration the infusion of a new real spiritual principle into the soul, then it does not consist in a mere reformation of life, however exact. Before we prove and confirm this assertion, let it be observed, 1st, That this reformation of life, which we say is not regeneration, is the indispensable duty of all men;—2. That the principle before described infallibly produces this reformation; therefore, 3dly, The difference comes to this,—we say, *Regeneration consists in a spiritual renovation of our nature*;—our modern Socinians say, *It consists in a moral reformation of life*. Now, as we grant that this spiritual reno-

vation of nature will infallibly produce a moral reformation of life, so, if they will grant that this moral reformation of life proceeds from a spiritual renovation of our nature, this difference will be at an end.

Now the Scripture abundantly testifies, that in regeneration there is a new spiritual principle, which is the production of the Holy Spirit: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." 2 Cor. v. 17. This is produced in the soul by a creating act of the power of God, or it is not a creature; and it is superinduced into the faculties of the soul, or it is not a new creature. It must be something that has a subsistence of its own in the soul, or it can be neither new nor a creature; and that the production of it is by a creating act of almighty power, the Scripture declares, Eph. ii. 10. Ps. li. 10. It is a new spiritual principle wrought in us by the Spirit of God. "No," say some; "a new creature is only a changed man." It is true, but then this change is internal also: "yes, in the inclinations of the mind;"—but it is by a real infusion of a new principle of spiritual life. "No; it denotes only a new course of conversation;—the expression is metaphorical;—a new creature is a moral man that has changed his way; for if he were always a moral man, then he was always a new creature." This is good gospel, at once overthrowing original sin, and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. This doctrine, I am sure, was not learned from the fathers, of whom some used to boast; and this way of turning all scripture expressions of spiritual things into metaphors, is the way to turn the whole into a fable; or, at least, to render the gospel the most obscure method of teaching the truth of things that ever was used in the world.

The new creature, therefore, does not consist in a new course of actions, but in renewed faculties, with new dispositions, power, and ability to perform them. Hence it is called the "divine nature." 2 Pet. i. 4. This (*THEIA PHOSIS*) *divine nature* is not the nature of God, of which in our own persons we are not subjectively partakers; yet, a nature it is,—a principle of operation, and that divine or spiritual; an habitual

holy principle, wrought in us by God, and bearing his image.

The whole of what we intend is declared in Eph. iv. 22, 23, 24, "Put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt, according to deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind,—and put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness." The work of regeneration is here described. The foundation of the whole is laid in our being renewed in the spirit of our mind, or being transformed in the renovation of our mind (Rom. xii. 2.) The principle itself infused into us, is called the *new man*, because it consists in the universal change of the soul, as it is the principle of all spiritual and moral actions; and it is opposed to the *old man*, or the corruption of our nature, as it is the principle of all actions. Rom. vi. 6. It is not a corrupt conversation, but the principle and root of it; for it is distinguished from the conversation of men; and it is called a new man, because it is the effect of God's power in a new creation. Now the object of a creating act is an instantaneous production. Whatever preparation there may be for it, the production of a new being by creation is in an instant. This, therefore, cannot consist in a mere reformation of life. We are the "workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus to good works."—There is a work of God in us, preceding all our good works towards him; for before we can perform them, we must be created unto them, or spiritually enabled to perform them. Again: This new man is said to be "created in righteousness and true holiness." This has a respect to a man created in innocence: he was made in the image of God. Now, this image of God did not consist in reformation of life, for he had the image of God before he performed any good action at all. It consisted in the rectitude of his whole soul, and ability for the obedience required of him. Such, therefore, must be our regeneration, antecedent to evangelical reformation of life, and fitting us for it according to the will of God.

And thus also our Saviour speaks:—"A good tree

bringeth not forth corrupt fruit, neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." Luke vi. 43. The fruit follows the nature of the tree; and there is no way to change the nature of the fruit, but by changing the nature of the tree. Now all amendment of life is but fruit; but the changing of our nature is antecedent to it. The Scripture constantly distinguishes between the grace of regeneration and that obedience or holiness which is the effect of it. God's method is first to cleanse our natures,—to "take away the heart of stone, and give an heart of flesh;" to write his law in our hearts, and put his Spirit in us; and then the effect and consequence is, that we shall "walk in his statutes, keep his judgments, and do them;" that is, reform our lives, and yield obedience to God. These things, therefore, are distinguished as causes and effects. Rom. vi. 3—6. Col. iii. 1, 5.

Further. This work is described to consist in the "sanctification of the whole spirit, soul and body" (1 Thes. v. 23;) and if this is what some men intend by reformation of life and moral virtue, they must certainly gain much esteem for their perspicuity in teaching spiritual things; for who would not admire them for such a definition of morality? namely, that it is the sanctification of the whole spirit, soul and body, of a believer by the Holy Ghost?—but, in short, there is no description of regeneration in the Scripture in its nature, causes, or effects; no name given to it, no promise made of it, nothing said of the means or power by which it is wrought, but what is inconsistent with this bold *Pelagian figment*, which is destructive of the grace of Jesus Christ.

This vain imagination evidently arises from a denial of original sin; for if man be not originally depraved, it is certain that he needs no spiritual renovation. It is enough that by change of life he renounce a custom of sinning, and reform his conversation;—but, as it has been already shewn, and will be more fully evinced, that in our regeneration the native darkness of our minds is dispelled, spiritual light introduced, the stubbornness of our wills removed, a new principle of life

bestowed, and the disorder of our affections cured,—so the contrary opinion, directly opposite to the Scriptures, the faith of the ancient church, and the experience of all believers, has nothing but ignorance and confidence to support it.

Thirdly. The work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration, does not consist in enthusiastical raptures, ecstasies, voices, or any thing of the like kind. Such things may have been pretended to by some weak and deluded persons; but the countenancing such imaginations, or teaching men to expect them while holiness was neglected, is a false accusation, as our writings and preachings fully testify. Therefore, as to this negative principle, we observe, That the Holy Spirit usually exerts his power in the use of means; and that he works on men agreeably to their natures. He does not come upon them with involuntary raptures; using their mental powers as the evil spirit wrests the body of possessed persons; his whole work is rationally to be accounted for by those who believe the Scriptures, and have received the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive. Indeed, the efficiency of the Spirit in quickening our souls, is no otherwise to be comprehended than any other act of creating power; for as we “hear the wind, but know not whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit;”—but this is certain, that he works nothing but what is determined and declared in the written word; and that he puts no force on the faculties of our souls, but works in them and by them suitably to their nature. Yet so it is come to pass, that many regenerate persons have been looked upon by the world as mad, enthusiastic, and fanatical. So the captains of the host esteemed the prophet who came to anoint Jehu; and the kindred of our Saviour, when he began to preach the gospel, said he was beside himself;—so Festus judged of Paul,—and the Author of the Book of Wisdom represents the acknowledgments some will hereafter make: “They shall say, because of the trouble of their minds, This is he whom we accounted a scorn, and a common reproach. We fools esteemed his life mad-

ness, and his latter end to have been shameful; but now is he reckoned among the sons of God, and his lot is among the holy ones."—From what has been said, it appears

That the work of the Spirit in regeneration, ought to be seriously considered by the preachers and hearers of the gospel. As to the former, there is a peculiar reason for their attention to it; for they are employed in the work itself by the Spirit of God, as instruments of effecting it. Hence the apostle Paul styles himself a father:—"Though you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you, through the gospel." He had been the instrument of their conversion, and was therefore their spiritual father. So, speaking of Onesimus, he calls him his son, whom he had begotten in his bonds. Now certainly it is the duty of ministers to understand their work;—to be spiritually skilled in the doctrine of regeneration as to its nature, causes, effects, and evidences, is one principal part of a minister's furniture for his work; without which he cannot "divide the word aright," nor show himself a workman that needs not to be ashamed. Yet it is scarcely imaginable with what rage of spirit, with what scornful expressions, this whole work is traduced, and exposed to contempt! Some who have laboured in it are charged with "prescribing tedious trains of conversion, and subtile processes of regeneration, to fill people's heads with swarms of supersitious fears and scruples about the due degrees of godly sorrow, and the certain symptoms of a thorough humiliation." Could any mistake be charged on particular persons in prescribing rules in these things, not warranted by Scripture, it were not amiss to refute them; but these expressions are evidently intended to reproach the word of God itself; and I must profess, that I believe the degeneracy from the truth and power of religion, and the contempt that is cast on the grace of Christ, will be sadly ominous to the whole state of the reformed Church among us, if not corrected in time!—but what I affirm is, that it is a duty indispensably incumbent

on all ministers of the gospel to acquaint themselves well with the nature of this work ; without which they cannot discharge any part of their office properly. If all who hear them are born "dead in trespasses and sins ;" if they are appointed of God to be the instruments of their regeneration, it is a madness, hereafter to be accounted for, to neglect a diligent enquiry into this great work ; and the ignorance of this, or negligence about it, with the want of an experience of its power in their own souls, is one chief cause of that lifeless and unprofitable ministry which is among us.

It is also the duty of all who hear the word preached, to enquire into it. It is to such whom the apostle speaks : "Examine yourselves whether you be in the faith ; prove your own selves ;—know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates ?" It is the concern of all individual professors to examine what work of the Spirit of God there has been on their hearts ; and none will deter them from it but those who design to hoodwink them to perdition. The doctrine concerning it is fully revealed unto us ; and it is of such importance to understand its nature and our own interest in it, that it cannot be neglected without the greatest madness and folly. Besides, there is great danger of men's being deceived in this matter, for it is the very hinge on which their eternal state absolutely turns ; and certain it is, that many persons deceive themselves about it ; for they evidently live under one of these pernicious mistakes :—either That men may go to Heaven without being born again ; or, That they may be born again, and yet live in sin.

CHAPTER II.

Works of the Holy Spirit preparatory to Regeneration.

WITH respect to the work of regeneration, *positively* considered, we may observe, That usually there are certain preparatory operations on the souls of men an-

tecedent to it; but yet regeneration does not consist in them, nor can it be educed out of them.

First. There are some things required of us in a way of duty, which are so in the power of our natural abilities, that nothing but corrupt prejudices and custom in sinning keeps men from the performance of them; and these are (1.) An outward attendance to the dispensation of the word of God, and other means of grace. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Hearing the word is the ordinary means of ingenerating faith. This is required of all to whom the Gospel comes; and this they are able to do, as well as any other natural action; and where men do it not, but despise the word at a distance, it is merely from supine negligence, carnal security, and contempt of God, which they must answer for.

(2.) A diligent intention of mind, in attendance on the means of grace, to understand and receive the things declared as the mind and will of God. For this end God has given men their reason, that they may exercise it about their duty towards him, according to the Scriptures; and there is nothing in this beyond the power of our rational faculties, assisted with those common aids which God affords to men in general; and great are the advantages which may be attained hereby. Persons who diligently apply their rational abilities to spiritual matters, as externally revealed in the word, usually attain great advantages by it, and excel their equals in other respects; as Paul did when he was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel. Were men as diligent in their endeavours after knowledge in spiritual things, as they are to get skill in arts and sciences, it would be much better with many than it is. The omission of this duty is the principal occasion of the eternal ruin of multitudes to whom the Gospel is preached. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." In diligent regard to the word, men well know that they do no more than what they can and ought to do:—all pleadable pretences of inability are far from them. They

cannot but know, and they shall hereafter be forced to confess, that it was merely from their own cursed sloth, sensuality, love of the world, love of sin, and contempt of God, that they were diverted from a diligent attendance on the means of conversion; complaints of which against themselves will form a great part of their last dreadful cry.

It is true indeed, that in the most diligent use of outward means, men are not able of themselves to attain unto regeneration, without a special internal work of the Spirit on their souls; but ordinarily, God, in the effectual dispensation of his grace, meets with those who attend with diligence on the outward administration of the means of it. I say, ordinarily, in comparison of them who are despisers and neglecters of them. Sometimes, indeed, he goes out of his way, as it were, to bring home to himself a persecuting Saul from a course of open rebellion; but usually he dispenses his grace among them who attend the means of it; for thereby he glorifies his word, and shews his approbation of our obedience to his institutions.

Secondly. There are certain internal effects, wrought on the souls of men, of which the word preached is the instrumental cause, and which generally precede regeneration; and these are Illumination,—Conviction,—and Reformation; the first respects the mind only; the second the mind, conscience, and affections; and the third the life and conversation.

1. Illumination. All the light or knowledge we have of spiritual things, comes under this denomination. There is that which arises merely from an industrious application of our rational faculties, to understand the doctrines of revelation; and this is a light, super-added to the innate conceptions of the human mind, which, without divine revelation, could never have conceived of spiritual things; and the reason why so few endeavour to attain this knowledge, is because of the carnal enmity of their minds to things themselves which are revealed.—Again: There is an illumination which is a special effect of the Holy Ghost on the mind, by the word; and which makes a great addition to

what is purely natural, or attainable by the mere exercise of our natural abilities; for it adds perspicuity to it. Hence some are said to "know the way of righteousness;" they clearly and distinctly apprehend the doctrine of the Gospel as the way, the only way, the way of God's righteousness for sinners. It adds also a stronger assent to the truth than mere natural reason can attain. Hence those who are thus illuminated are sometimes said to believe; their faith being only a naked assent to the doctrines revealed.* Again: It adds to them some kind of joy. These receive the word with joy; rejoice in the light of it for a season; and yet have no root in themselves. Sometimes, it adds gifts also in great variety; and where this illumination is thus improved, which it is chiefly by exercise, it wonderfully affects the mind, and raises its apprehensions of spiritual things: but all this comes short of regeneration, nor does it necessarily ensue upon it: Many are thus enlightened, and yet never converted: but in the order of nature it is previous to conversion, and materially preparatory to it; for saving grace enters into the soul by light.

2. Conviction of sin is another effect of the word, antecedent to real conversion. This the apostle describes: "If ye prophecy, and one cometh in who believeth not, he is convinced of all; and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest, and so falling down on his face, he will worship God." 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25. This generally includes, First, a disquieting sense of the guilt of sin, with respect to the law, threatenings, and judgments of God. Things before slighted and made a mock of, now become the soul's burden; and hereby the minds of men are affected with fears in various degrees; not that these degrees are prescribed as necessary; but only described as they usually occur, for the relief and direction of such as are concerned in them. Secondly, Sorrow or grief for sin committed, because past and irrecoverable, which is the formal reason of this condemning or legal sorrow; this

* So Simon (Acts viii. 12) and many of the Jews, John ii. 28.

"sorrow of the world," which brings men into bondage under fear. Thirdly, Humiliation for sin, which is the exercise of sorrow and fear in acts of confession, fasting, praying, and the like. This is the true nature of legal humiliation;—and, lastly, Unless by these things the soul be swallowed up in despair, it cannot but be filled with desires, inquiries, and contrivances about deliverance out of this condition.

3. Reformation of life frequently ensues: as is represented in the account of "the unclean spirit" forsaking his house for a time, and returning to it again, finding it "swept and garnished." So the apostle Peter speaks of some "who escape for a time the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of Christ," but who were afterwards entangled and overcome.

All these things may be wrought in the minds of men, and yet the work of regeneration never be perfected in them; and though they are good in themselves, and effects of God's kindness, yet they may not only be lost, with respect to any final advantage, but also be abused to our great disadvantage, and to the contraction of more guilt; and it is occasioned one of these ways; some are not careful to improve this light and conviction for its proper end and design, which is to take them off from their self-confidence, and to direct them to Christ;—where this is not attended to, they insensibly wither, and come to nothing. In other persons, they are overborne by the power of their lusts, and the violence of temptation; they are sinned away, and leave the soul in a much worse condition than they found it. Again: Others rest in these things, as though they comprised the whole work of God towards them, and especially where they occasion any considerable reformation of life, or attendance to religious worship; but all this is owing to the abuse of these things by carnal minds; in their own nature they are good, and prepare the mind for the reception of the grace of God.

Thirdly. All these things, wrought instrumentally by the word, are effects of the power of the Spirit of God. The word itself, barely proposed to the minds of men, will not so affect them. To confirm this, con-

sider the preaching of the prophets; of Jesus Christ himself; and of the apostles: and among ourselves, many sit all their days under the Gospel, and feel none of these effects; while others are really affected, convinced, and converted. It is therefore the ministration of the Spirit, in and by the word, which produces these effects.

There is indeed an objection of some moment, against the ascription of this work to the Holy Spirit; for if all these things may be wrought in the minds of men, who yet come short of the grace of God, how can he be thought to be the Author of this work? Shall we ascribe to him a weak and imperfect work? or think that he deserts what he has undertaken?

I answer,—In many persons who are thus affected, real conversion ensues; and thus these preparatory operations make way for the introduction of a new spiritual life; and so they belong to a work that is perfect in its kind. Wherever they come short of it, it is not from any imperfection in themselves, but from the sins of men. For instance, common illumination and conviction of sin have a tendency to conversion; and where this end is not attained, it is from the wilfulness and stubbornness of the mind. This actual resistance God is pleased to take away in some: it is therefore of sovereign grace where it is removed; but the sin of men, where it is continued. Besides, the Holy Spirit is a voluntary agent:—he works when and how he pleases. All his operations infallibly accomplish the end he designs; which, in these, is only that men may be enlightened, humbled, and reformed; wherein he fails not. Thus, he is pleased to take on him the management of the law, and so to bring the soul into bondage thereby, that it may be stirred up to seek after deliverance; and he is thence called the “Spirit of bondage unto fear.” This work constitutes the third ground in the parable of the sower. It receives the seed, and springs up hopefully; till by cares of the world and temptations, it is choked and lost. Now, because it often resembles regeneration so much, that neither the world nor the church are able to distin-

guish between them, it is of great importance to the professors of the gospel to inquire, Whether they have experienced any other work on their souls or not?—for, though this be a good work, yet, if men attain no more, they will perish. I shall therefore give some instances of what this whole work, in its utmost improvement, cannot effect; whereby persons may form a judgment how it is with them.

1. It may be observed, that we have placed all the effects of this work in the mind, conscience, affections, and conversation; but the *Will*, which is the ruling faculty of the soul, is not renewed by it; and therefore the power of sin will continue. It is true, that the will meets with many checks from the light of the mind and reflections of the conscience; so that it cannot sin with its former freedom and security. Its greediness in sinning may be restrained by the terrors of the Lord, on the one hand, or the hope of eternal rest, on the other; but still, the inclination of the will itself is to sin, and that continually.

2. The effects of this work on the mind; proceed not so far as to give delight and satisfaction in the spiritual nature and excellencies of the things revealed to it. True saving illumination gives the mind such a direct intuitive insight into spiritual things, that in their own nature they please and satisfy it: so that it is cast into the mould of them, and rests in them: but the work we have spoken of reaches not so far; the light it communicates may cause a man to like the gospel for its beneficial effects; but it will not give him such a spiritual insight into the mystery of God's grace by Christ Jesus, that the soul, in its first direct view of it, should admire it, approve it, and find spiritual solace and refreshment in it.

3. This work extends to the conscience also; but yet it does not "purge the conscience from dead works to serve the living God." It renders it indeed more quick and ready in reproofing sin than before; but yet, conscience is not hereby wrought to such an abhorrence of sin for itself, as continually to direct the soul to the blood of Christ for cleansing.

4. This work operates greatly on the affections ; but it does not fix them, nor fill them. It is required that our affections be fixed on heavenly things, and true grace will effect it. The joys, the fears, the hopes, the sorrows which the work before mentioned produces, are uncertain and unstable. Sometimes they are like a river ready to overflow its banks ; at other times, as " waters that fail," not a drop comes from them. Sometimes they are hot, then cold ; sometimes all heaven, sometimes all earth : but true grace fixes the affections ; there may be great variety as to their exercise ; yet their constant bent is to spiritual things : but this work does not fill the affections : it comes like a number of strangers to an inn to lodge, who occupy a great deal of room, and make an appearance as if none were in the house but themselves ; but the family is not removed : they live there still. So light and conviction come and lodge in the mind and affections, as if they would possess them entirely : but after all, they leave the quiet places of the house for the world, and sin, and self. On the contrary, true grace fills up the affections with spiritual things. It denies not room to lawful things, as relations and enjoyments, merely as they are natural and are content to be subordinate to God ; but if they would be carnal, disorderly, or predominant, it turns them out.

5. This work is frequently carried on so far in reformation, that it will express the whole form of godliness ; but here also it is deficient ; for it will consist with reigning sins of ignorance. It leads not to the abhorrence of all sin, as sin ; nor to a desire of universal conformity to Christ ; but often leaves great sins unregarded. Besides, its reformation of the life is seldom universal, as to all known sins, unless it be for a season, while the soul is in a flagrant pursuit of self-righteousness. When the efficacy of first impressions abate, lust will reserve some peculiar way of venting himself. Further : The conversion of such persons is assuredly fading and decaying :—coldness, love of the world, carnal security, get ground upon them every day. Hence, though by abstinence from

open sensualities, they may not be given up to them, yet they become walking and talking skeletons in religion; dry, sapless, and useless worldlings: but where the soul is inlaid with real grace, it is in a state of thriving continually. Such an one will go on, from strength to strength, from grace to grace, from glory to glory, and will be fat and flourishing in old age. By these things we may learn to distinguish between the preparatory work mentioned, and that of real saving conversion to God.

CHAPTER III.

Corruption or Depravity of the Mind by Sin.

WE have, I hope, made our way plain for the due consideration of the great work of the Spirit in regeneration; whereby he forms the members of the mystical body of Christ, and prepares living stones for the building of a temple in which the living God will dwell.

There is a two-fold state of men with respect to God, which is comprehensive of all individuals in the world; for all men are either unregenerate or regenerate. Again: It is evident in the Scripture, that all men are born in an unregenerate condition. This is so positively declared by our Saviour (John iii. 3, &c.) that it cannot be denied. Now regeneration being the deliverance of men from that condition, we cannot discover wherein it consists, without a declaration of that state from which it delivers us; and this we shall insist upon at large; giving an account of the state of fallen nature, under a loss of the original grace of God.

In the declaration of man's corrupted nature, the Scripture insists chiefly on these three things:—(1.) The depravity of the mind; which it calls by the names of Darkness and Blindness. (2.) The depravity of the will and affections, expressed by weakness or impotency, and stubbornness or obstinacy. (3.) By the

general name of Death, extended to the condition of the whole soul.

All men, by nature, are in a state of darkness and blindness, with respect to God and spiritual things. Be men in other things wise, learned, and skilful; in spiritual things they are dark, blind, and ignorant. This, indeed, is a matter which the world cannot endure to hear of. They think it but an artifice which some weak men have got, to reflect on persons wiser than themselves. On the like occasion the Pharisees scornfully asked our Lord, "Are we blind also?" But he informed them, that their presumption of knowledge would only aggravate their guilt; and that notwithstanding all their boasting, "they had not heard the voice of God at any time, nor seen his shape."

Some talk much about the power of our intellectual faculties, as though they were not at all impaired; as if all the disadvantages of our nature by the entrance of sin, is in the disorder of the affections,—the inferior parts of the soul, which are apt to rebel against the pure light of the mind: but it is no difficult undertaking so to demonstrate the depravity of the minds of men by nature, and their impotency to discern spiritual things, as that the proudest of them shall be unable to return a solid answer to it; and herein we plead for nothing but the known doctrine of the ancient Catholic Church, declared in the writings of the most learned fathers, and determinations of councils against the Pelagians; whose errors are again revived among us by a crew of Socinianized Arminians.

To this purpose we may first consider the testimonies of Scripture:—"The people which sat in darkness saw great light, and to them that sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up."* Before the illumination afforded by the Gospel, the people mentioned "sat in darkness," or lived under the power of it;—and in the same sense, when Christ preached the Gospel, "the light shined into darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not;"†—gave not place to the

* Matt. iv. 16.

† John i. 9.

light of Truth. The commission which he gave to Paul, when he sent him to preach the Gospel, was, "To open the eyes of men, and to turn them from darkness to light."* Thus the apostle speaks to the Ephesians, in chap. v. 8 :—"Ye were darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord ;"—and again to the Colossians, in chap. i. 13 :—"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness ;" as also the apostle Peter, in 1 Epist. ii. 9 :—"Who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light." Now, this darkness of an unregenerate state, is compared by Paul to that which was at the beginning, before the creation of light ; when "darkness was upon the face of the deep."† There was no creature that had a visive faculty, there was darkness subjectively in all ; and there was no light to see by ; but all was objectively wrapt in darkness. In this state of things, God, by an almighty act of his power, created light—"God said, Let there be light,—and there was light!"—and thus it is in the new creation. "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shines into the hearts of men, to give them the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Cor. iv. 6.) Spiritual darkness is upon all men, till God, by an effectual work of the Spirit, shine into them, or create light in them.

To clear our way in this matter, we must consider, first, The nature of this darkness ; and, secondly, The power of it in the minds of men.

First. The term Darkness is metaphorical, and borrowed from that which is natural. What natural darkness is, all men know ; they know it is that which hinders men from all regular operations which are directed by the outward senses. As, when persons have not light to see by ; as in the case of the Egyptians, during the three days darkness that was in their land, they had their visive faculty ; but, having no light, "they saw not one another, neither rose any from his place." There is also darkness when men are actually blind ; either born so, or made so. Thus the angel smote

* Acts xxvi. 18.

† Gen. i. 2.

the Sodomites with blindness ; and Paul the sorcerer. —However the sun may shine, it is one perpetual night to the blind.

It is thus with regard to spiritual darkness ; for there is an objective darkness ; a darkness that is *on* men ; and a subjective darkness ; a darkness that is *in* them. The first consists in the want of those means whereby they may be enlightened,—the word of God, and the preaching of it.

It is the work of the Holy Spirit to dispel this darkness ; and this he does by sending the word of the Gospel into any place, as he pleases ;—for the Gospel does not get ground in any place, nor is it restrained from any people, by accident, or by the mere endeavours of men ; but it is disposed of according to the sovereign will of the Spirit. He forms and sends the preachers of it ; and disposes of them, as to the places where they shall dispense it, either by express revelation, as of old,—or by the secret operations of his providence : and therefore, though we ought to care and pray much for the continuance of the Gospel in any place, and its propagation in others, yet we need not be over-solicitous about it ; for the Holy Ghost has taken this work on himself, and will carry it on, according to the counsel of God, and his purposes respecting the kingdom of Christ in the world.

It is subjective darkness which we have more immediately to consider, and which is intended in this natural depravity of the mind as to all spiritual things ; for I shall not treat of it with respect to natural or moral concerns ; though it were easy to prove from Scripture that the whole rational soul is weakened by the Fall, in all its faculties ; but it is the impotence and depravity of the mind as to spiritual things only, that we shall now consider.

It is in consequence of this darkness that unregenerate men are not able of themselves, by their own reason and understanding, however improved, to discern spiritual things when outwardly revealed to them, without an effectual work of the Spirit, inducing a new saving light into them. Suppose the mind of a person

be no way hurt or impaired by any personal defect ; suppose it free from any contracted habits of vice or voluntary prejudices ; yet on the proposal of the doctrine of the Gospel, by the most skilful "masters of the assemblies," with the clearest evidence and demonstration of the truth, it is not able of itself to understand and receive them in a spiritual manner, without the special aid of the Holy Spirit. To evince this truth, we may consider the description of the mind itself, and its operations, given us in Eph. iv. 17, 18 : "This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart." The apostle here speaks of the Gentiles ; but he speaks of them on account of that which is common to all men by nature ; for he treats, not of their idolatrous and vicious practices, as some pretend, but of their state and condition with respect to the faculties of their souls wherein there is no difference naturally among men ; and he expresses the powers of the soul by three terms ; the Mind,—the Understanding,—and the Heart ; and these are all affected with the darkness of which we treat.

1. There is the Mind (*A NOUS.*) This is the leading faculty of the soul ; that which looks out after proper objects for the will and affections to receive and embrace. Hereby we have our first apprehensions of all things, whence deductions are made to our practice ; and to this is ascribed vanity : "They walk in the vanity of their mind." Things are called vain which are useless and unprofitable : hence the apostle calls the idols and religious rites of the Gentiles "vain things, lying vanities, things that cannot profit." Now this vanity of the mind includes its natural inclination to vain things, and its own instability. It seeks about to lead the soul to rest and satisfaction, but always to vain things ; such as sin, the world, pleasure, and the pride of life. These are called the figments of the

hearts of men, which are only evil continually.”* These it frames, producing them abundantly, as the earth does grass, or as a cloud pours out drops of water. And herein, it is unstable; for that which is vain is various, inconstant, light, as the natural mind is. And this has befallen it by the loss of that fixed regularity in which it was created. Man possessed the same faculty of imagination in his original state; but then all its actings were regular. The mind was able to direct them all to their proper end. God was their principal object, and all things in order to him. But now, being turned off from him, the mind, in them, engages in all manner of confusion, and they all end in disappointment. They offer their service to the soul to bring it satisfaction; and though they are rejected one after another, as not answering what they pretend to, yet they constantly arise, and keep the whole soul under everlasting disappointments; and hence it is that the mind cannot assent to the common principles of religion, which yet it cannot deny.

2. There is the Understanding;† this is the directive, discerning, judging faculty of the soul, that leads it to practice. It guides the soul in the choice of those ideas which it receives by the mind; and this is more corrupt than the mind itself; for the nearer things come to practice, the more prevalent is the power of sin in them. This also is said to be “darkened:” and being so, it is in vain to pretend a sufficiency in it to discern spiritual things, without a supernatural illumination. Light, in the dispensation of the Gospel, shines, or throws some rays of itself on this darkened understanding; but it receives it not.‡

3. There is the Heart.§ This is the practical principle of operation, and so includes the *will* also. Light is received by the mind, applied by the understanding, and used by the heart. On this, says the apostle, there is “blindness.” It is not mere ignorance, but a stubborn resistance of light and conviction; an obdurate hardness, whence it rejects the impressions of divine truth.

* Gen. vi. 5.

† DIANOIA.

‡ John i. 5.

§ KARDIA.

On these accounts, men are said to be *darkness*. There may be degrees in moral privation ; but when it is expressed in the abstract, it is a sign that it is total and absolute. There is no more disposition in natural men to receive saving knowledge, than there is in darkness itself to receive light ; and therefore, when God is pleased to give us a new ability to understand spiritual things, he is said to give us a new faculty, because of the utter disability of our minds naturally to receive them. (1 Jo. v. 20.) Let vain men boast as they please of the ability of their rational faculties ; this is their state by nature, according to his judgment that must stand for ever.

And by the way, it may not be amiss to stop a little, and consider that practical exposition which the whole world affords us of this text, concerning the variety of the mind ; for this is the source of all the vanity with which the world is filled. Almost all that we see or hear is vain :—all that makes so much bustle in the world is vain. There is a kind of vanity which men bring into things that really exist, and that are in themselves good, useful, or at least indifferent. Thus, they corrupt their habitations, their trade, their wealth, their power, &c. ; they join innumerable vanities with them, which render them loathsome and contemptible. But besides this, they invent many things, on purpose to support and nourish vanity. Such are pompous ceremonies in religion, like those of the Church of Rome, calculated only to furnish provision for vain minds ;—and such are plays, masquerades, and the whole multitude of carnal amusements ;—which are merely theatres for vanity to act itself upon. The human mind is wholly vain, and is a fruitful womb of monstrous births. The world is now almost six thousand years old, and yet is no nearer the bottom of its springs of vanity than it was the first day that sin entered into the world. New sins, new vices, new vanities continually appear ; nor is there any way to prevent them, but by the renewing influences of the Holy Ghost. The world may alter its shape, may change its scenes, and act its part in new habits, but still it will be altogether

vain, so long as natural, uncured vanity predominates in the human mind.

Again : It is an important duty, incumbent on all believers, to watch over the remains of this vanity in themselves. This distemper of our natures is not entirely cured at once : and there are several effects of it sensibly felt among real Christians. Hence they find instability in holy duties. How ready is the mind to wander in them, and to entertain vain and foolish thoughts ! How ready is it to unbend and let down its intention !. Now all this is from the uncured relics of our natural vanity. Another sad effect of it is, that it leads professors of the Gospel to an undue conformity to the world, in its customs, dress, and conversation ; so that in many instances it is hard to distinguish between them and the world. Further : It discovers itself in foolish imaginations, whereby it secretly makes "provision for the flesh ;" and these, if not soon checked, will proceed to such an excess as greatly to taint the whole soul. It is therefore an important duty diligently to oppose this radical distemper.

Secondly. Having considered the *nature* of this darkness, we may proceed to consider the *effects* that are ascribed to it, with respect both to the disposition of the minds in this state, and its actings with regard to spiritual things.

1. As to its dispositions or inclinations, it is so perverse and depraved, that it is "alienated from the life of God." Unregenerate men are said to be "alienated, and enemies in their minds, by wicked works." All life is from God. The life which we have in common with all other living creatures, is from him ; and particularly that life which we have by the union of the rational soul with the body : but it is a special life unto God, which is here intended. It is the life which God requires of us, that we may please him here and enjoy him hereafter :—the life of faith and obedience by Jesus Christ ; that life of which God is the Author : that life whereby God liveth in us by his Spirit. It is the life of which the Gospel is the law and rule : a life,

all whose fruits are holiness, and evangelical obedience. It is a life that never dies; it is eternal life.

The carnal mind is alienated from this life; it has no inclination to it; but carries away the whole soul with aversion from it; and this appears, in its un readiness to receive instruction about the concerns of it. Hence men are dull and "slow of heart to believe;" "heavy in hearing;" and slow in the apprehension of what they hear. So are all men with respect to what they dislike. Hence also they prefer any other life before it. The first choice a natural mind makes, is of a life of sin and pleasure: this it delights in, and would never willingly depart from. But if by afflictions or convictions it be forced to give it up, then it will chuse and extol a moral life, a life in, by, and under the law; though at last it will avail no more than the former, which it was forced to leave. The thoughts of this spiritual life it cannot away with; the notions of it are uncouth; the description of it unintelligible, and the practice of it only odious folly, or needless superstition.

2. The power of the mind also, with respect to spiritual things, is to be considered: and this, in short, is none at all: for the mind of a natural man, however excited and improved, is not able in a spiritual manner to receive and embrace spiritual things, unless it be renewed by the Holy Ghost. This the apostle plainly asserts: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Cor. ii. 14.

The subject spoken of is (*PSUCHIKOS ANTHROPOS*) the natural man. The epithet is in Scripture opposed to (*PNEUMATIKOS*) spiritual; and is explained by Jude to signify "not having the Spirit;"—one who has all that can be derived from the first Adam;—endowed with a rational soul.*

* Some persons tell us, that by the natural man is intended "A man given up to sensual pleasures and brutish affections; not governed by the dictates of reason." But it is evident that the apostle distributes all men into natural and spiritual. He who is not a spiritual man, let

The words suppose the proposal of some things to this natural man ; and these are "the things of the Spirit of God ;"—"The wisdom of God in a mystery ;"—"the things that are freely given to us of God ;"—"the mind of Christ ;" and "Jesus Christ, and him crucified."

That which is affirmed of the natural man is doubly expressed. "He receiveth them not ;" and "He cannot know them." A power of receiving them is in this assertion denied ; and a will of rejecting them is implied. But to free this assertion from objections, let it be observed, That it is not the mere literal sense of doctrines that is intended. For instance, that Jesus Christ was crucified, is a proposition that any natural man may understand and assent to, and be said to receive : and all the doctrines of the Gospel may be taught in propositions, the meaning of which a natural man may understand ; but it is denied that he can receive the things themselves ; for there is a wide difference between the mind's receiving doctrines notionally, and receiving the things taught in them really.

It is necessary to our receiving of spiritual things really, that we receive them under an apprehension of their conformity to the wisdom and holiness of God. The reason why men receive not Christ crucified as preached in the Gospel, is because they see not a consistency in it with the divine perfections ; nor can they receive it till they see an expression of divine power and wisdom in it.

It is necessary also that we discern the suitableness of these things of the Spirit to the great ends for which they are proposed : unless we see this distinctly, we cannot but judge them weakness and foolishness. These ends being the glory of God, and our deliverance from a state of sin and misery, with a translation

him be as rational as they presume themselves to be, or would have the world believe they are, is a natural man. The supposition of a middle state destroys the design of this whole discourse of the apostle. Besides, this is the best and softest name ever given in Scripture to unregenerate man ; and there is no reason why it should be thought to express the worst sort of them.

into a state of grace and glory, unless we perceive their fitness to effect them, we cannot receive them aright.

It must be observed, that there is a twofold capacity, or ability, of receiving or knowing spiritual things in the mind of man. 1. There is a natural power, consisting in the suitableness of the faculties of the soul to receive them in the way that they are proposed to us. This is supposed in all the exhortations, promises, precepts, and threatenings of the Gospel; for in vain would they be proposed to us, if we had not rational minds to apprehend their sense and importance. None pretend that men are, in their conversion to God, like stocks and stones that have no understanding; if we were such, as to the capacity of our nature, it would not become the wisdom of God to employ the means before mentioned for the effecting that work.* 2. There is, or may be, a power in the mind to discern spiritual things, which it can immediately exercise upon their being proposed to it, in the same manner that a man who has a visive faculty can discern visible objects when placed before him. This power must be spiritual and supernatural.

Of the assertion thus explained, the apostle gives us a double reason; the first, taken from the nature of the things themselves with respect to the mind, is; that they are foolishness. They are in themselves "the wisdom of God;" "the wisdom of God in a mystery," or full of deep mysterious wisdom. But to the natural man, they are foolishness; not only though they are the wisdom of God, but because they are so; for the carnal mind is enmity against God. Now that is esteemed foolishness which is either weak and impertinent; or disproportionate to its designed end; or undesirable, compared with other things; or ineligible on the terms

* Some pretend, that whatever is required of us as a duty, we have a power in ourselves to perform. If, by this power, they mean that our minds are fit and meet, as to their natural capacity, for such acts, it is freely granted; but if they intend such an active power as is of itself able to answer the commands of God in a due manner, they deny the corruption of our natures, and render the grace of Christ useless.

on which it is proposed : and it is on one or all of these accounts that spiritual things appear to be foolishness to the natural man : which we shall demonstrate by some instances.

That they were so to the learned philosophers of old, is evident from the testimony of our apostle, 1 Cor. i. 22—28, and from the history of the first ages of the Church. Had spiritual things been suited to the minds of natural men, then those who had most improved their minds, and were raised to the highest exercise of their rational powers, would have embraced the Gospel far more readily than the poor and illiterate ; for we always find that valuable improvements in natural things are first adopted by the wise and intelligent ; but here it was quite otherwise.—They were the wise, rational, and learned men of the world who made the strongest opposition to spiritual things ; and that avowedly, because they were foolishness to them, and their opposition was managed with scorn and contempt, as they thought foolish things ought to be treated.

The principal mysteries of the Gospel are rejected by many as foolish, because they think them false ; though, indeed, they have no reason to think them false, because they suppose them to be foolish ; and they only charge them with falsity, to countenance themselves in judging them to be folly. Whatever concerns the incarnation of the Son of God, the satisfaction he made for sin, the imputation of his righteousness, and the effectual workings of his grace, are rejected by many, because they judge them to be false ; and that which induces them so to determine, is because they look on them as foolish, and unsuited to their rational principles.

Many plainly scoff at them, and despise them as the most contemptible notions in the world. Such were prophesied of in old time, as mentioned by the apostle Peter, 2 Epist. iii. 3, 4. The world swarms with scoffers at spiritual things, as being unfit for rational spirits to receive, because they are so foolish ; but these things were foretold, that we should not be troubled or

shaken in our minds : yea, the Atheism of some, is a mean of confirming the faith of others.

It is not much better with some, who dare not thus openly oppose the Gospel, for they profess to believe and obey it ; and so much of it as consists in the confirmation and improvement of the moral principles of the law of nature, they will highly extol : they will shew how agreeable they are to reason ; and what expressions suitable to them may be found in the ancient philosophers : but as to those things which most properly belong to the Gospel, and are communicated by supernatural revelation only, such as the offices of Christ, the dispensation of the Spirit, with those graces and duties which are purely evangelical,—these are foolishness to them, and the preaching of them is canting and folly ; and some of those persons, who do not go so far as the friar at Rome, who said, that “ St. Paul fell into great excesses in these things,” have yet dared to accuse his writings of darkness and obscurity ! and for no other reason, but because he insists on the declaration of these spiritual mysteries.

The event of the dispensation of the Gospel proves, that the spiritual things of it are foolishness to the most ; for as such they reject them. Suppose a man of reputation should go to his neighbours, and with much earnestness assure them, that by a certain method, they may greatly increase their worldly substance, until they exceed the wealth of kings : if in this case they do not follow his advice, it must be because they judge the means prescribed to be no way suited to the end proposed, that is, to be foolish :—and this is the state of things with respect to the mysteries of the Gospel. Men are informed how great and glorious they are, and what blessed effects will follow their reception of them : the beauty and excellency of Christ ; the inestimable privilege of adoption ; the great and precious promises ; the glory of the world to come ; and the necessity and beauty of holiness are preached to them, and pressed upon them ; yet after all, we see how few apply themselves with any industry to receive them, or at least do actually receive them ; and the reason is,

because indeed to their darkened minds these things are foolishness, whatever they pretend to the contrary.

As the foregoing instances shew why a natural man will not receive the things of the Spirit, so the apostle adds a reason why he cannot; and that is taken from the manner in which alone they may be usefully received, and which he cannot attain unto; "they are spiritually discerned." The natural man, by natural light, discerns natural things; "the things of a man knoweth the Spirit of a man;"—and the spiritual man, by a spiritual light, discerns spiritual things; "for none knoweth the things of God but the Spirit of God, and he to whom He will reveal them." This ability he denies to a natural man; and this he proves, (1.) Because it is the work of the Spirit to endow the minds of men with that ability; which would be needless if they had it by nature; and (2.) The light itself, whereby alone spiritual things can be discerned, is created in us by almighty power. 2 Cor. iv. 6.

From these premises it is evident, that there is in the mind of a natural man both a natural and a moral impotence, whereby it cannot receive the things of God; the first immediately affects the mind; the latter the will and affections; by reason of the one he cannot receive them, for want of light; by the other he will not, because they are foolishness.

(1.) There is a natural impotence, through the depravity of the faculties of the mind, whereby a natural man is absolutely unable, without a special renovation of the Holy Ghost, to discern spiritual things in a saving manner;—and yet this is no excuse for the sin of rejecting them; for though it have the nature of a punishment, and is our misery, yet it is our sin also: it is the misery of our persons, and the sin of our natures; and no man can plead his sin as an excuse for another sin of any kind.—This impotence is natural, because it consists in the deprivation of a power that was originally in our minds; and this is consistent with what we said before of the natural power of the mind to receive spiritual things; for that power respects the na-

tural capacity of our faculties ; this impotence is the depravation of them with respect to spiritual things.

(2.) There is also a moral impotence, whence the mind never will receive them, but will always reject and refuse them ; and that because of various corruptions and prejudices invincibly fixed in them, causing them to look on them as foolishness. Hence it will come to pass, that no man will be judged and perish at the last day, merely on account of his natural impotence ; every one to whom the Gospel has been preached, shall be convinced of positive actings in their minds rejecting it for the love of self, sin, and the world. Thus, our Saviour tells the Jews that "no man can come unto him, unless the Father draw him : " such is their natural impotence, that they cannot ; and yet he tells them elsewhere, " You will not come to me that you might have life ! " The present thing in question was not the power or impotence of their minds, but the obstinacy of their wills and affections, for which men shall be judged at the last day : " For this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. " Hence it follows, that the will and affections being more corrupted than the understanding, no man actually applies his mind to the receiving the things of God to the utmost of his ability. There is not a due improvement of the capacity of his natural faculties, for the discharge of his duty towards God.

It remains that we consider what is the power and efficacy of this darkness, to keep natural men in a constant aversion from God and the Gospel. To this purpose some testimonies of Scripture must be considered.

We are said, in Col. i. 13, " To be delivered from the power of darkness : " the word (*EXOSIAS*) signifies authority or rule ;—that which bears sway. Hence the sins of men are called " works of darkness ; " not only such as are usually perpetrated in the dark, but such as the darkness of men's minds inclines them to, and naturally produces. This is elsewhere called " the power of Satan ; " for it is not only the internal darkness of the mind that is intended, but the whole state

of darkness, with what is contributed thereto by Satan and the world; but yet all is resolved into this internal darkness; for Satan has no power or authority over men, but by means of it; hereby alone he works effectually in the children of disobedience; hereby he seduces and corrupts them; nor has he any way to fortify their minds against the Gospel, but by increasing this darkness in them. The power of this darkness will appear in the following instances:—

1. It fills the mind with enmity against God and all the things of God. “You were enemies in your minds;” Col. i. 21. “The carnal mind is enmity against God; it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be.” Rom. viii. 7. Now God in himself is infinitely good and desirable. “How great is his goodness, how great is his beauty!” There is nothing in him but what is suited to excite and satisfy the affections of the soul. To them that know him, he is the only delight, rest, and satisfaction. Whence then is it that the minds of men should be possessed with enmity against him? Enmity against him who is absolute and infinite goodness, seems incompatible with human affections: but it arises from this darkness, which is the corruption of our nature.

This enmity exerts itself either closely or openly, even in persons who sit under the preaching of the word, until they are effectually prevailed upon by victorious grace.—And however they may be doctrinally instructed in true notions concerning God, yet in the application of them to themselves, they “always err in their hearts.” All the practical notions they have of God, tend to alienate their hearts from him, either by contempt or by undue terror. They “think that God is such an one as themselves!” at least that he will accept of them, though they continue in their sins! Now this is a fruit of the highest enmity against God, though palliated with the presence of the highest apprehensions of his goodness: for as it is the heinous crime of gross idolaters that they represent the Deity in the shape of men or beasts,—so it is a sin of higher provocation to conceive of him as so far like to bestial

men, as to approve and accept of them in their sin : and where this is not the case, this darkness in the minds of men will, on the other hand, represent God as all fire and fury, inexorable and intractable.

Again : This darkness fills the mind with enmity against all the ways of God ; for as the carnal mind is enmity against God, so it is "not subject to his law ;" it dislikes the whole way and work of living to him through this blindness ; and esteems the whole rule and measure of it to be foolishness.

2. This darkness fills the mind with wills or perverse lusts that are directly contrary to the will of God. There are (THELEMATA DIANOION) the wills or lusts of the mind (Eph. ii. 3.) ; that is, its habitual inclinations to sensual objects :—it "minds earthly things ;" and hence the mind is said to be "fleshly." It savours, approves of nothing but what is sensual and vain. The thoughts and imaginations of the mind are always employed in providing sensual objects for this vain and fleshly frame ; and are therefore "evil continually." This is the course of a darkened mind ; its fleshly will excites vain thoughts, it "minds the things of the flesh : " and the particular bent of these imaginations, answers the predominance of any special lust in the heart or mind.

3. It fills the mind with prejudices against spiritual things as proposed in the Gospel ; and from these prejudices it has neither light nor power to extricate itself.—No small part of its depravity consists in its readiness to embrace them, and pertinacious adherence to them. Some few of these prejudices may be instanced.

(1.) The mind, from the darkness that is in it, apprehends that spiritual things are inconsistent with true contentment and satisfaction. These are what all men eagerly pursue in a thousand different ways ; and these suppose themselves in the way to those little tastes of pleasure which they have already obtained. Now these hopeful beginnings they will not forego. "Thou art wearied in the greatness of thy way ; yet saidst thou not, there is no hope ! Thou hast found the life

of thine hand, therefore thou wast not grieved." Isa. lvii. 10. They are sometimes ready to faint in the pursuit of their lust, because of the disappointments they find in them, or the evils that attend them : but yet they will not give over the chace ; they say not " There is no hope ;" and the reason is, " They find the life of their hand : " something or other daily comes in, from their employments, their company, or their expectations, which keeps their hope alive, and makes them unwilling to change their present condition. They find it none of the best ; but do not think there can be a better. Could they but obtain more mirth, wealth, health, honour ; more suitable objects to their sensual desires, then they think it would be better than it is : but as for any thing differing from these in its whole kind, they can entertain no respect for it. In this state of mind the spiritual blessings of the Gospel are proposed. At first sight, they judge that these things will not promote their carnal pleasures ; and they rightly judge ; they will not countenance nor help the lusts of men. Nay, it is no hard matter for them to discover that the power of the Gospel once admitted, will crucify their corrupt affections ; for this is the avowed design of it. It leaves men, unless on extraordinary occasions, the possession of their wealth and reputation, if lawfully obtained ; but it forbids the abuse of them, and dissolves the league that is between the mind and these objects.—They must no more be looked on as the chief good, nor as the matter of satisfaction ; but must give way to spiritual and eternal things. Now this secretly alienates the carnal mind, and prejudice is excited against it, as threatening to deprive the soul of all its present satisfaction ; for, through the power of this darkness, it cannot discern the excellency of heavenly objects, nor have any suitable affections for them. Hereby this prejudice becomes invincible ; they neither do, nor can, nor will admit of those things which are utterly inconsistent with their carnal views.

(2.) The mind, by this darkness, is filled with prejudices against the mystery of the Gospel. As natural men cannot receive, so they despise the wisdom of

God in it, and look on its doctrines as empty and unintelligible notions;—and this is the prejudice whereby this darkness prevails in the minds of men otherwise knowing and learned; it has done so in all ages, and in none more effectually than in the present. The spiritual wisdom of God in the Gospel, appears to the wisest men in the world, while under the power of this darkness, fanatical, chimerical, and foolish. To demonstrate this, is the design of the apostle (1 Cor. i. and ii. chapter); for he directly affirms that the doctrine of the Gospel is the wisdom of God in a mystery; that this wisdom cannot be discerned by the wise and learned of the world who have not received the Spirit of Christ; and, therefore, that the things of it are weakness and folly to them; and that which is foolish is to be despised; yea, folly is the only object of contempt; and hence we see that some, with the greatest contempt imaginable, despise the purity, simplicity, and whole mystery of the Gospel, who yet profess to believe it;—but to clear the nature of this prejudice, a few things may be distinctly observed.

There are two sorts of things declared in the Gospel. First, Such as are absolutely its own, and which have no footsteps in the law or light of nature. Of this kind are all things concerning the love of God in Christ Jesus; the mystery of his incarnation and mediation; the dispensation of the Spirit; our adoption, justification, and sanctification; in short, every thing that belongs to the purchase and application of saving grace. These things are purely and properly evangelical,—peculiar to the Gospel alone.

There are also other things in the Gospel which have their foundation in the law and light of nature; such are all the moral duties. These are in some measure known by the light of nature; men are able to form a judgment of their actions, whether they be good or evil, before the Gospel is preached to them; but the word directs to the right performance of our duty, from a right principle, by right rule, and to a right end. Hereby it gives them a new nature, and turns moral duties into evangelical obedience.

Hence it follows that this is the method of the Gospel. It first proposes things which are peculiarly its own : it reveals its own mysteries as the foundation of faith and obedience : it inlays them in the mind, and thereby conforms the whole soul unto them ; and then it grafts all duties of moral obedience on this stock of faith in Christ. This is the method which the apostle Paul observes in all his epistles ; he first declares the mysteries of faith that are peculiar to the Gospel, and then descends to those moral duties which are regulated thereby.

But the prejudice which we speak of, inverts the order of these things. Those who are under the power of it, fix their minds first and principally on those things which have their foundation in the light of nature. These they make the foundation ; whereas the Gospel allows them to be only the necessary superstructions on the foundation ; and resolving to give the pre-eminence to moral duties, they often treat the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel with contempt, as of no importance comparatively ; and to avoid the trouble of examining them, they reject them at once as unintelligible or unnecessary ; or else, by forced interpretations, enervating the spirit and perverting the mystery of them, they square them to their own low and carnal apprehensions. They would reduce them all to their own light, as some ; to reason, as others ; to philosophy, as the rest. Hereby advancing morality above the grace of the Gospel, they at once reject the Gospel and destroy Morality ; for taking it off from its proper foundation, it falls into the dirt, of which the conversation of such men is no small evidence.

It was thus of old. God says of Ephraim, " I have written to him the great things of the law ; but they were counted as a strange thing." The law was the entire means of God's communicating his mind and will to that people, as his whole counsel is revealed to us in the Gospel ; these he wrote unto them—made them plain and perspicuous : but after all, they were esteemed by them, as the gospel now is, a thing foreign and alien to their minds. They will regard what is

akin to the principles of their nature, morally good or evil; but the hidden wisdom of God in the gospel is a strange thing.

The power of this darkness will further appear by considering the nature and use of the mind, which is the faculty affected with it. The mind may be considered either as it is theoretical or contemplative, or as it is practical, determining the will to its actual operations, moral and spiritual. Hence it follows, that neither the will nor affections can desire or cleave to any good but what is presented to them by the mind, and as it is presented. That good which the mind cannot discover, the will cannot chuse, nor the affections cleave unto. The mind is the eye of the soul; and if this "eye be evil, the whole soul is full of darkness." As the soul cannot, by any other faculty, receive and embrace that good which the mind does not apprehend,—so when the mind is practically deceived, and captivated by the power of prejudices, the will and affections cannot deliver themselves from entertaining that evil which the mind has perversely assented to. Where the mind is reprobate, so as to call good evil,—and evil good, the heart, affections, and conversation, will be conformable thereto; and therefore, in Scripture, the deceit of the mind is commonly laid down as the principle of all sin.

And this is a brief delineation of the state of the human mind while unregenerate with respect to the things of God; and from hence we conclude that it is so depraved, vitiated, and corrupted, that it is not able upon the proposal of spiritual things in the preaching of the Gospel, to understand, receive, and embrace them in a proper spiritual and saving manner, without the internal, supernatural, and effectual influence of the Holy Ghost.

CHAPTER IV.

Life and Death, Natural and Spiritual, compared.

ANOTHER scriptural description of unregenerate men is, that they are spiritually dead ; and hence, in like manner, it follows, that there is a necessity of an internal effectual work of the Holy Ghost on the souls of men, to deliver them out of this state by regeneration ; and this principally respects their wills and affections, as the darkness before described does their understandings. There is a spiritual life whereby men live to God ; this, they being strangers to, and alienated from, are spiritually dead : and this the Scripture declares concerning all unregenerate persons, partly in direct words, and partly in other assertions of the same import. Of the first sort the testimonies are many and express : " You were dead in trespasses and sins ;" Eph. ii. 1. ver. 5. " When you were dead in sins." Col. ii. 13. " And you being dead in your sins." 2 Cor. v. 14. " If one died for all, then were all dead ;" and the same is asserted in the second way, where the recovery of men by the grace of Christ is called their quickening, or the bestowing a new life upon them ; for this supposes they were dead.

Spiritual death is metaphorically so called, from its analogy to natural death. It may therefore be useful to consider the nature of life and death natural, in allusion to which the state of unregenerate men is thus described.

By life, in general, we understand, The act of a quickening principle on a subject to be quickened, by virtue of their union ; and this includes (1.) The principle of life itself, which in man is the rational living soul ; " God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." Having formed his body of the dust of the earth, he creates for him a distinct animating soul, and infuses it into the matter prepared for its reception ; and as he did thus in the creation of the human species at first, he continues so to do in the ordinary course of his providence for the

continuation of it ; for having ordained the preparation of the body by generation, he immediately infuses into it the living soul, the breath of life. There is (2.) The quickening act of this principle on the subject quickened, in and by virtue of union. Hereby the whole man becomes a living soul, a person quickened by a vital principle, and enabled for all natural vital actions. There are (3.) The acts of this life ; such are the actings of the senses, motion, reception of food, and the like. These are acts of life, as life ; inseparable from it, and intended to preserve it. There are also such acts of life as proceed from the special nature of this quickening principle ; as the voluntary rational acts of our understandings and wills.

Hence it appears in what natural death consists ; and it includes (1.) The separation of the soul from the body. (2.) A cessation of all vital actings ; for that union from whence they should proceed is dissolved ; and (3.) As a consequent of these, there is in the body an impotence and inaptitude to all vital operations ; for the body is no longer able to effect them.

First. There is no principle in spiritual life in unregenerate persons ; no power of living to God, or of performing any acceptable duty. It is with them as to all the acts of life spiritual, as it is with the body as to the acts of life natural, when the soul is departed from it. Whatever men do, unless endowed with a quickening principle of grace, they can perform no act spiritually vital. "The carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be." Rom. viii. 7. So then, "they that are in the flesh cannot please God," ver. 8. Our Lord says, that "no man can come to him unless the Father draw him." And so it is figuratively expressed, where natural men are compared to evil trees ; it is affirmed, That they cannot bring forth good fruit unless their nature be changed. There is no power in men by nature, on the mere proposal of their duty, and exhortations to the performance of it, accompanied with the most suitable motives, to perceive, know, will, or do any thing in a

manner acceptable to God, without a new gracious habit enabling them thereto.*

Secondly. There is in this death an actual cessation of all vital acts. From this defect of power it is that natural men can perform no vital act of spiritual obedience. Hence all their words are "dead works;" they proceed not from a principle of life; are unprofitable as dead things; and end in death eternal.

We may now consider how this spiritual life is communicated to us. The original spring and fountain of it is with God. "With thee is the fountain of life." And hence our life is said to be "hid with Christ in God;" and it differs from life of any other kind, in that the fulness of it is communicated to Christ as Mediator; and from his fulness we receive it. Hence he is said to be "our life;" and it is not so much we that live, as "Christ that liveth in us."

The fountain of this life being in God, and the fulness of it being laid up for us in Christ, he communicates the principle and power of it to us by the Holy Ghost, according to and for the ends of the new cove-

* It is objected, That this renders all exhortations useless. I answer (1.) Nothing is requisite in the application of means to an end, but that they are suited to it, and that the subject to be wrought on is capable of being affected by them. Now exhortations are suited as moral instruments, to produce the effects of faith and obedience; and the faculties of the soul are meet to be wrought upon by them. (2.) Exhortations, &c. primarily respect our duty, not our ability;—not what we can, but what we ought to do.—(3.) God is pleased to make these means of communicating life; and he has appointed them to this end, because they are suited to our moral and intellectual faculties.

It is further objected, That if men are utterly devoid of all power to live to God, is it righteous that they should perish eternally, merely for not doing what they are not able to do? I answer (1.) Men's disability is their sin. It came upon us by the sin of our first parents, all whose consequents are our sin and our misery. Rom. v. 12. Had it befallen us without a guilt truly our own, according to the law of creation, the case would have been otherwise. (2.) Men have a power in sundry things relating to obedience and salvation, to comply with his mind and will, which they voluntarily neglect; and this alone is sufficient to bear the charge of their eternal ruin. (3.) No man is so unable to do any thing for God, but he is able to do any thing against him. There is no command, but he can put forth a positive act of his will in rejecting it. This is the Scriptural account of the matter, by some traduced as fanatical and foolish, which the Lord Christ must answer for, not we; and the day will determine where the blame must lie.

nant;—for this is the promise of it, That God will first “write his law in our hearts,” and then we shall “walk in his statutes;” that is, the principle of life must precede all vital acts. Where this is not, no act of obedience can be so performed as to be an act of the life of God. To say that we have a sufficiency in ourselves, so much as to think a good thought;—that we have any power or ability of our own by nature to do any thing as we ought, is to overthrow the Gospel, and the faith of the Catholic Church in all ages,

Thirdly. In this state of spiritual death, there is not any disposition inclining to spiritual life: there is nothing of this kind in a dead carcase as to natural life. The dead body of Lazarus was re-animated by the introduction of his soul; but in itself it had not the least active disposition thereto. It is exactly thus with a soul dead in trespasses and sins. There is in it a remote power, in the nature of its faculties, fit to be wrought upon by the Spirit of God; but an immediate power, disposing it to spiritual acts, it has not; and the reason is, because natural corruption cleaves to it, as an invincible habit constantly inducing to evil; with which the least disposition to spiritual good is inconsistent. There is in the soul, in Scripture language, “the body of the sins of the flesh;” which unless removed by spiritual circumcision, through the virtue of the death of Christ, will lie dead to eternity. There is therefore in us that which may be quickened and saved; and this is all we have to boast of by nature. Though man by sin is become “like the beasts that perish,” being foolish and brutish in his mind and affections, yet he is not so absolutely; he retains that living soul, those intellectual faculties, which were the subject of original righteousness, and are capable of receiving again “the image of God,” by Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER V.

The Nature, Causes, and Means of Regeneration.

IGNORANCE of the true state of man as depraved by nature, is the principal cause of all the mistakes, ancient and modern, respecting regeneration : we have therefore insisted on it so far as was necessary to our present purpose, and sufficient to guide us in our enquiry after the work of the Holy Spirit in our deliverance from it.

It is evident that persons living and dying in this state cannot be saved. Among those who lay any serious claim to Christianity, there is nothing more acknowledged than that there is no deliverance from a state of misery without a deliverance from a state of sin ; for if we may be saved without the renovation of our nature, there was no need of the new creation of all things by Jesus Christ ; and if we may be saved under all the evils occasioned by the Fall, then Christ died in vain. Besides, it is inconsistent with the nature of God, his holiness, righteousness, and truth ; it is inconsistent with the law and gospel ; and impossible, in the nature of the thing itself, that such persons should become possessors of glory and rest with God. A deliverance therefore from this condition, is indispensably necessary to make us "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light."

This deliverance must be by regeneration. The determination of our Saviour is positive : "Except a man be born again (or from above) he cannot see the kingdom of God." John iii. 3. Whatever sense "the kingdom of God" is taken in, whether of grace here, or of glory hereafter, it is the same as to our present purpose. There can be no interest in it unless a man be born again ; and as this determination is absolute, so it is universal, comprising every individual of mankind ; and though men may have false apprehensions about regeneration, yet, as far as I know, all Christians are agreed, that it is the means of our deliverance from the state of sin, or rather our deliverance itself.

The Holy Ghost is the immediate author of this

work ; and this is also generally admitted ; nothing is more acknowledged (in words however) than that all the elect of God are sanctified by the Holy Ghost ; and regeneration is certainly the beginning of our sanctification. The Scripture is express in testimonies to this purpose. What our Saviour calls *being born again* (John iii. 3.) he calls *being born of the Spirit* (ver. 5, 6) ; for it is the " Spirit that quickeneth ;" and God saveth us, " according to his mercy, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

This being admitted, our inquiry must be after the manner and nature of this work ; for the nature of it depends on the manner of the Spirit's work in it. This, I confess, was variously contended about of old ; and the truth concerning it has scarcely escaped an open opposition in any age of the church ; but it was never traduced and reviled with so much impotence and ignorance as it now is, by some among ourselves. The ancient writers of the church, who looked into these things with most diligence and success, as Austin, Hilary, Prosper, and Fulgentius, taught the same doctrine ; for the substance of it that has been preached among us since the Reformation ; and which some have ignorantly charged with novelty : and the whole of it was nobly and elegantly expressed by Austin in his Confessions ; wherein he relates the experience of the truth he had taught in his own soul. I might follow their footsteps herein, but that there have been so many differences raised about the explications of their terms, that to carry the truth through so many intricacies would lead me too far from my original design. Our principal inquiry, at present, is about the work itself, and this must be both negatively and positively declared.

First. The work of the Spirit of God in regeneration does not consist in a moral suasion, that is, such a persuasion as may, or may not, be effectual ; though, properly speaking, that only is persuasion whereby a man is actually persuaded. Now the instrument of this moral suasion is the word of God, as contained in the

Scripture ; for by this we are commanded and persuaded to turn to God ; and the principal way whereby this mean is applied is the ministry of the church. This is the ordinary instrument which God employs in the regeneration of the adult ; and it is every way sufficient, in its own kind, as an outward mean.

As to the efficacy of this moral work, we must observe, (1.) That in the use of this mean for the conversion of men, there is first an instruction of the mind in the knowledge of God's will. Without this, there can be no room for the persuasive power of the word ; for it consists in affecting the mind with its own concern in something already known. (2.) There is a powerful persuasive efficacy in the dispensation of the word to a compliance with it. For instance ; suppose a man to be convinced by the word of God of his own sinful condition, of his danger on that account, and of the way whereby he may and ought to turn to God,—there are in the precepts, promises, and threatenings of the word, powerful motives and arguments to affect his mind, to seek after deliverance. Some indeed care not for them ; they despise them, and live and die in rebellion against the light ; but this is no proof that they are not powerful in themselves, though it proves that they are not sufficient of themselves, but only as the Holy Spirit is pleased to use them ; and their efficacy, as to the end proposed, arises from the following things :—

1. From an evidence of the truth declared in the gospel, “that it is not a cunningly-devised fable.” Where this is not admitted, there can be no persuasive efficacy in it ; but where it is, there the mind is under a disposition to the things themselves, to which it is persuaded ; and thus the whole efficacy of the word is resolved into the truth and veracity of God.

2. There is a proposal made to the wills and affections of men in the things so assented to : on the one hand, as they are good, and therefore worthy to be pursued and attained ; and on the other, as they are evil, and therefore to be avoided. For this is urged on men ; that to comply with the will of God according to the

gospel, is every way for their advantage, and will assuredly be attended with present peace and future glory. On the other hand, they are told that sin is the great disgrace of our nature, and the ruin of our souls; and that a continuance in it, with a rejection of the gospel, is foolish, irrational, and destructive. Every rational man must judge that spiritual things ought to be preferred before natural, and eternal things before temporal; and these things being so disposed of in infinite goodness and wisdom, they must certainly have a tendency to affect the wills and move the affections of men; and thus the efficacy of the word is resolved into the authority of God; for these precepts, promises, and threatenings are his, who has a right to give them, and a power to execute them.

3. Great efficacy is added hereto, from the management of these motives in the preaching the word. Some preachers, by the powers of oratory, addressing themselves to the passions by persuasive arguments, elegantly expressed, make strong impressions on the minds of their hearers: and herein, some place the principal efficacy of the ministry; but with me it is of no consideration: for our apostle rejects it utterly. "My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power."

4. We do not therefore suppose that the motives of the word are left to an operation merely natural, with respect to the ability of those who dispense it; but that it is also blessed of God, and accompanied with the power of the Holy Ghost, for the producing its effect on the souls of men: only the influence of the Spirit in this case, is supposed to extend no further than to motives, arguments, reasons, and considerations proposed to the mind, so to influence the will and affections.

Now, concerning this whole work, I affirm that the Holy Spirit does make use of it in the conversion of all adult persons, either by the word preached, or by some other application of light and truth to the mind derived from the word; for by the persuasive arguments which the word affords, our minds are affected,

and our souls so wrought upon, that conversion to God becomes our reasonable service ; but we also affirm, that the whole work of the Spirit in our conversion does not consist herein ; but that there is a real physical work, whereby he infuses a gracious principle of spiritual life into the souls of all who are truly regenerated ; and this we shall prove by the following arguments :—

1. If the Holy Spirit works on men only by proposing objects to them, and urging their regard to them by arguments to that purpose, then, after all, the will of man remains indifferent whether it will admit of them or not ; and indeed this is all that some plead for. It is true, that notwithstanding the grace thus administered, the will has power to refuse it, and to continue in sin : but that there is no more grace wrought in us but what may be so refused, is false ; for this ascribes the whole glory of our regeneration to ourselves, and not to God ; for, on this supposition, that act of our wills, whereby we turn to God, is merely an act of our own, and not of the grace of God. Besides, this would leave it absolutely uncertain, notwithstanding the purpose of God and the purchase of Christ, whether any one in the world should ever be converted or not ; which is contrary to the covenant of God with Jesus Christ. It is contrary also to the express testimonies of Scripture, wherein actual conversion is ascribed to this grace ; as in Phil. ii. 13, “ God worketh in us to will and to do.” The act of willing is of God’s operation ; and though we ourselves will, yet it is he who causeth us to will and to do, of his own good pleasure.

2. This moral persuasion confers no real supernatural strength on the soul ; for as it works only by motives and arguments, it can only draw out the strength that we have ; delivering the mind from prejudices and other moral impediments : internal spiritual strength neither is nor can be conferred by it ; and he who admits that there is any such spiritual strength communicated to us, must also acknowledge that there is another work of the Spirit of God upon us than can be effected by these persuasions.

3. It is indeed pretended by some, that grace, in

the dispensation of the word, does work really and efficiently, especially by illumination and excitation of the mind and affections ; and if, upon this, the will exerts itself in the choice of that which is good, then the grace thus administered concurs with it, assists it to perfect its act, and so, that the whole work is of grace. So pleaded the Semi-Pelagians, and so do others still. Now this is, in effect, to overthrow the whole grace of Jesus Christ, and to render it useless ; for it ascribes to man the honour of his conversion, his own will being the principal cause of it. It makes a man to beget himself anew, or to be born again of himself ; to make himself differ from others, by that which in a special manner, he has not received.

This is not all that we pray for, when we beg effectual grace for ourselves or others. Surely, he must be very indifferent in this matter, who only prays that God would persuade him or others to believe and to obey. The church of God has always prayed that God would work these things in us ; and those who have a real concern in them, do pray continually that God would effectually work them in their hearts ; that he would give them faith, and increase it in them ; and that in all these things he would work in them by the exceeding greatness of his power, " both to will and to do, according to his good pleasure." This argument was much pressed on the Pelagians by the Fathers ; and there is not a Pelagian in the world who ever sincerely prayed for divine assistance, with a sense of his want of it, but his prayers contradicted his profession. Indeed, for any person to continue praying for what is in his own power, is absurd and ridiculous ; and they do but mock God, who pray to him to do that for them which they can do for themselves, and which God cannot do for them but only as they choose to do it for themselves.

4. This moral persuasion, where it is alone, is not suited to effect the work of regeneration in persons who are really in that state of nature which we have before described. The most effectual persuasions cannot prevail with such men to convert themselves, any

more than arguments can prevail with a blind man to see, or with a dead man to rise from the grave;—wherefore, the whole description, before given from the Scripture, of the state of fallen nature, must be disproved, before this grace of moral persuasion can be thought sufficient for the purpose of regeneration.

I shall now proceed to shew, positively, wherein the work of the Holy Spirit, in regeneration, does consist.

There is then, in regeneration, not only a moral, but a physical immediate operation of the Spirit. So it is asserted (Eph. i. 19, 20) "That we may know what is the exceeding greatness of his power towards us who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead." The power here mentioned has an exceeding greatness ascribed to it, with respect to the effect produced by it. The power of God in itself, as to all acts, is equally great; it is infinite; but some effects are greater than others; such is that whereby he makes men believers; and to this power of God there is an actual operation ascribed, the nature of which is said to be of the same kind with that which was exerted in "raising Christ from the dead."—The work of God towards believers, consists in the acting of his divine power, by a real internal efficiency. So God is said to "fulfil in us all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power;"—and hence the work of grace is constantly expressed by words denoting a real internal efficiency; such are creating, quickening, forming, giving a new heart, &c.

This internal efficiency of the Holy Spirit, as to the event, is infallible, victorious, irresistible, or always efficacious; but the measure of the efficacy of grace, and the end to be attained, are fixed by the will of God. As to the end designed, it is always prevalent, and cannot be resisted; or, it will effectually work what God designs it to work; for if he will work, who shall let it?" There are many motions of grace, even in the hearts of believers, which are so far resisted, that they do not attain that effect which in their own nature they have a tendency to; but they are effectual so far as they were

designed in the purpose of God. Wherever the Holy Spirit puts forth his power for regeneration, it removes all obstacles, and infallibly produces the effect intended. This proposition being of great importance to the glory of God's grace, and most signally opposed by the patrons of free will, must be both explained and confirmed. We say therefore,

1. The operations of divine power are suited to our nature; our minds, wills, and affections. He draws us with "the cords of a man;"—and the work itself is expressed by persuading and by alluring: it has no more repugnancy to our faculties than a prevalent persuasion has.

2. He does not possess the mind with any enthusiastical impressions; nor does he act absolutely upon us as he did in extraordinary *prophetical inspirations* of old, where the minds and bodies of men were merely passive instruments; but he works on the minds of men in and by their own natural actings, through an immediate impression of his power.

3. He therefore offers no violence to the will. This faculty is not capable of compulsion; if it be compelled, it is destroyed. There is an inward, almighty, secret act of the power of the Holy Ghost, effecting in us the *will of conversion* to God; so acting on our wills, as that they also act themselves, and that freely. The Holy Spirit doth, with the preservation, and in the exercise of the *liberty of our wills*, effectually work our regeneration and conversion to God. I shall confirm this truth with evident testimonies of Scripture, and reasons contained in them or deduced from them.

First, The work of conversion, and especially the act of believing, is expressly said to be of God, to be wrought in us, to be given to us, by him. The Scripture says, Not that God gives us ability only to believe, or such a power as we may make use of if we will, but faith, repentance, and conversion themselves, are said to be the work of God. Thus, in Phil. i. 29, "To you it is given, on the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." To believe on Christ, expresses saving faith itself. This

is given to us ;—and how is it given? Even by the power of God working in us “to will and to do of his own pleasure,” ver. 13. Our faith is our coming to Christ. “And no man,” saith he, “can come unto me, except it be given him of my Father.” John vi. 65. In ourselves we are utterly destitute of power for this end; “no man can come to me:” however men may be disposed or prepared, whatever arguments may be used with them, yet no man of himself can believe, can come to Christ, unless faith itself be given to him; that is, wrought in him by the grace of the Father. This is again asserted, both negatively and positively, in Eph. ii. 8: “By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.” Our own ability and God’s gift are here distinguished. If it be of ourselves, it is not the gift of God: if it be the gift of God, it is not of ourselves. In like manner God is said to give us repentance, 2 Tim. ii. 25. This is all we plead for. God, by the exceeding greatness of his power, actually works faith and repentance in us; so that they are mere effects of his grace; and his working in us infallibly produces the effect intended, because it is actual faith that he works, and not merely a power to believe, which we may exert or not as we please.

Secondly. As God works in us faith and repentance, so the way whereby he does it, makes it evident that he does it by a power infallibly efficacious; for he takes away all resistance, all opposition: “The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy soul, that thou mayest live.” To have the heart circumcised, “is the putting off the body of the sins of the flesh;” that is, our conversion to God. It is the giving “an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear;” that is, spiritual light and obedience, by the removal of all hindrances. This is the immediate work of the Holy Ghost. No man ever circumcised his own heart. No man can say he began to do it by the power of his own will, and then God only helped him by his grace. As outward circumcision on the body of a child was

the act of another, and not of the child, who was passive, and the effect only in the child,—so it is in this spiritual circumcision: it is the act of God; and as it is the blindness and stubbornness in sin that is in us by nature, which hinders us from conversion to God, by this circumcision they are taken away; and how should the heart resist the work of grace, when that whereby it should resist is effectually removed?

Let us also consider the following concurrent testimonies:—Ezek. xxxvi. 26, “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh; and I will give you a heart of flesh.” To which may be added, Jer. xxiv. 7, “And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.” As also (Isa. xlv. 3, 4, 5) “I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I, will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring;”—so Jer. xxxi. 31, “I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts.”

The subject spoken of in these promises, is the HEART, or whole rational soul; and it is described as stony. Our hearts, by nature, as to living to God, or his fear, are stony; and who has not some experience hereof, from the remains of it still abiding in him?—and two things are included in this expression:—(1.) An *unfitness* for any spiritual actions. Whatever else the heart can do, in natural or civil affairs, it can do no more as to the great concern of living to God than a stone. (2.) An obstinate stubborn *opposition* to the grace of God; and, therefore, it stands opposed to the pliability of an heart of flesh. This heart, this impotency and enmity, God says “he will take away.” He does not say that he will endeavour to take it away, nor that he will use such and such means to take it away, nor that he will persuade and assist men to remove it; but, that absolutely and positively he himself will do it. What, therefore, God promises herein, is, as to the event, infallible, and, as to the operation, irresistible.

'As what God takes from us, so what he bestows on us is here expressed; and this is a new heart and a new spirit; the benefit hereby received is also declared; for those who have this new heart do actually, by virtue of it, "fear the Lord, and walk in his ways." There must, therefore, be in this new heart a principle of holy obedience; the creation of which in us is our conversion to him; for he "converts us, and we are converted;" and how is this new heart communicated? "I will," saith God, "give them a new heart:" "I will put a new spirit within them;" and, yet more plainly, "I will write my law in their hearts;" alluding to the tables of stone on which the letter of the law was actually engraved; and so God writes the law, the matter and substance of it, in our hearts; and this he does by a principle of obedience and love to it, actually wrought within us.

Another argument is taken from the condition of men by nature; and if it be indeed such as we before described, surely, none can be so brutish as to imagine it may be cured, merely by aid of rational consideration. We shall, therefore, inquire what that grace is by which we are delivered from it.

1. It is called a Vivification, or quickening. We are by nature "dead in trespasses and sins;" in our deliverance from this state we are said to be quickened; though "dead, to hear the voice of the Son of God and live." Now, no such work can be wrought on us but by an effectual communication of a principle of spiritual life. Some think to evade this, by saying "All these expressions are metaphorical;" and, indeed, it is well if the whole Gospel be not a metaphor to them; but if there be not in us by nature an impotence to all acts of spiritual life, like that which is in a dead man to all the acts of natural life;—if there be not an equal power of God necessary for our deliverance from that state, as is necessary for the resurrection of a dead body, they may as well say that the Scripture speaks not truly, as that it speaks metaphorically: and that it is almighty power that is exerted herein, we have already proved; and what do these men intend by rai-

sing from the dead?—a persuasion of our minds by rational motives?—Who ever heard of such a monstrous expression, if there be nothing else in it? What could the holy writers mean by calling this work “a quickening of men who were dead in sin, through the mighty power of God,” unless it were by a noise of insignificant words, to draw us off from a right understanding of what is intended? And it is well if some are not of that mind.

2. The work itself wrought, is, our REGENERATION. I have proved before that this consists in a new, spiritual, vital principle of grace, infused into the soul by the Holy Spirit, enabling persons in whom it is, to spiritual, vital acts of faith and obedience. Some, indeed, deny all habits of grace; and on such a supposition, a man is no longer a believer than he is in the actual exercise of faith; but this would plainly overthrow the covenant of grace, and all the grace of it. Others expressly deny all gracious, supernatural infused habits, but admit of such as are acquired by frequent acts of grace.

But the Scripture gives us another description of this work of regeneration; for it consists in the renovation of the image of God in us. “Be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness.” That Adam in innocency had a supernatural ability of living to God, habitually residing in him, enabling him to fulfil all his commands; and that this was the image of God in him, is generally acknowledged. This was lost by the Fall. In regeneration there is a renovation of this image of God, and it is renewed by a creating act of almighty power, which, “after God,” or according to his likeness, “is created in righteousness and true holiness.” There is, therefore, in it an implantation of a new principle of spiritual life, which is called Spirit: “That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” It is the Spirit of God of whom we are born, and that which is so born is spirit,—not the natural faculties of our souls; they are once created, once born, and no more but a new principle of spiritual obedience, where-

by we live to God ; and this is the production of the immediate efficiency of the Spirit.

This will more plainly appear, if we consider the faculties of the soul distinctly, and what is the special work of the Spirit upon each of them. 1. The leading faculty of the soul is the MIND, or understanding. Now this is corrupted by the Fall ; but in regeneration this depravity is removed ; so that we come to see spiritual things in a spiritual manner, that we may savingly know God and his will, as revealed in and by Jesus Christ ; and therefore, he is said to give us an understanding, 1 John v. 20: "The Son of God hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true;" which he does by his Spirit. Man by sin is become like the "beasts that perish, which have no understanding." Men have not lost their natural reason absolutely ; it is continued, with the free (though impaired) use of it in natural affairs : but it is lost as to the special use of it in the knowledge of God ; for to "do good they have no knowledge." It is corrupted, not so much in the principle of its actings, as with respect to their proper object. Wherefore, though this giving and understanding be not the creating that faculty anew, yet it is that gracious work, without which it will no more enable us to know God aright than if we had none at all. The giving us an understanding, therefore, is causing our understandings to understand savingly ; and it is thus expressed by the apostle : "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him ; the eyes of your understanding being opened, that you may know what is the hope of his calling." The revelation here intended, is subjective, enabling us to apprehend what is revealed ; and not objective in new revelations ; and this is further evident by the ensuing description of it ; "the eyes of your understanding being opened." There is an eye in the understanding—the natural ability it has to discern spiritual things : but this eye is sometimes said to be blind, sometimes to be darkness, sometimes to be closed. Now it is the work of the Spirit of grace to open this

eye ; and this is the effectual removal of that depravity of our mind which we before described ; and how are we made partakers hereof ? It is of the gift of God ; for he “ gives us the Spirit of wisdom and revelation ” to that end ; he gives us “ a heart to know him.”

This is also called the Renovation of our minds ; “ renewed in the Spirit of our minds,” which is the same with being “ renewed in knowledge.” And this renovation has a transforming power, to change the whole soul into an obedient frame towards God. Now this work of renovation is peculiarly ascribed to the Holy Spirit, Titus iii. 5, “ the renewing of the Holy Ghost.” Herein God is said to communicate a light to our minds, by which we see the objects proposed to us in the Gospel usefully and savingly ; “ God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.” Did God no otherwise work on the minds of men but by an external proposal of truth to them, to what purpose does the apostle mention that almighty act of creating power which first produced the natural light ? It is intolerable confidence in men to deny that the act of God, in the spiritual illumination of our minds, is of the same nature with that whereby he created light at first ; and because the effect produced is called Light, the act itself is described by shining ; and the light so communicated is the actual “ knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ ;” that is, as God is revealed in Christ by the Gospel.

2. It is principally with respect to the WILL and its depravity by nature, that we are said to be dead in sin. Herein is seated that peculiar obstinacy, from whence it is that no unregenerate person does, or can walk up to his light in obedience. Now, in our conversion to God, this faculty is renewed, by an effectual implantation of a principle of spiritual life ; and it is determined to its acts by his powerful operations. Were it not thus, then the whole glory of our conversion might be ascribed to ourselves ; and we should make ourselves “ to differ from others.” Neither can any

purpose of God, concerning the conversion of any one be certain, seeing that after all, the will remaining undetermined, may not be converted. Neither can there be an original infallibility in the promises of God concerning the multitudes that should believe; seeing it is possible not one may do so, if it depend on the undetermined liberty of their wills; and then also must salvation necessarily be of "him that willeth, and of him that runneth, and not of God, who sheweth mercy on whom he will have mercy;" and the whole efficacy of the grace of God is thereby made to depend on the wills of men. There must, therefore, be such a work of the Spirit on our wills, as may cure the depravity of them before described, freeing us from the state of spiritual death, and causing us to live to God.

3. In like manner, a prevailing love is implanted in the AFFECTIONS, causing the soul, with delight, to cleave to God and his ways. This removes the enmity before described, "The Lord God will circumcise thine heart—to love the Lord thy God." This circumcision consists in putting off "~~the body of the sins of the flesh.~~" He crucifies the flesh, with the lusts and affections thereof. Some men are inclined to think that all the depravity of our nature consists in that of the sensitive part of the soul, or our affections. The folly of this opinion has been before exposed; yet it is not denied that the affections are exceedingly depraved; so that by them, principally, the mind and will act according to their perverse and corrupt inclinations; but in the circumcision of the heart, these corrupt affections are crucified by the Spirit; he takes from them their enmity and depraved inclinations really, though not perfectly; and, in their stead, fills us with holy spiritual love and delight; not changing the being of our affections, but sanctifying and guiding them by the principle of saving light, and uniting them to their proper objects.

From the whole, it appears that our regeneration is a work of the Spirit of God, and not any act of our own. I say, it is not so our own as by any outward helps to be educed out of the principles of our na-

tures; and herein is the Scripture express; for mentioning this work directly with respect to its cause, it assigns it positively to God: 1 Pet. i. 3, "God, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again." James i. 18, "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth." And on the other hand, it excludes the will of man from any active interest therein: 1 Pet. i. 23, "Born again, not of corruptible seed, but of the word of God." John i. 13, "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." It is, therefore, incumbent on those who plead for the active interest of the will of man in regeneration, to produce some testimonies of Scripture where it is assigned to it, as the effect of its proper use. Where is it said That a man is begotten anew by himself?—and if it be granted, that whatever be our duty or power herein, yet these expressions denote an act of God, and not ours, the substance of what we contend for is granted. It is true, God commands us to "circumcise our hearts, and make them new;" but thereby he declares our duty, not our power; for he himself promises to work in us what he requires of us: and that power which we have and exercise, in the progress of this work in sanctification and holiness, proceeds from the infused principle which we receive in our regeneration; for all which ends, we ought to pray for the Holy Spirit, according to the example of holy men of old.

CHAPTER VI.

The Manner of Conversion, explained in the Instance of Augustine.

As among all the doctrines of the Gospel, there is none opposed with more violence and subtilty than that of regeneration by the Holy Spirit, so there is scarcely any thing more despised than that any persons should profess their experience of it, or declare the manner in which it was wrought on themselves.

The very mention of it is become a reproach, among some who call themselves Christians; and to plead an interest in this grace, is to forfeit a man's reputation with many who would be thought wise and rational. Nor is this a modern practice; but it seems to have been started in the earliest times; and the enmity of Cain against Abel was but a branch of this proud and perverse inclination. The instance of Ishmael also, is representative of all such as, under an outward profession of the true religion, scoff at those who, being like Isaac, children of the promise, profess an experience of its internal power; and the same practice may be traced in succeeding ages. Hence holy Austin, entering upon the confession of his greater sins, designing thereby to magnify the grace of God in his conversion, provides against this expected scorn:—"Let arrogant men," saith he, "deride me, who never were savingly cast down, nor broken in pieces, by thee my God: yet I will confess my shame, to thy praise."* We must not therefore think it strange, if the same truth, the same practice, and the same profession of it, still meet with the same treatment. Let them despise it who were never humbled for sin nor relieved by grace; the holy work of God's Spirit is to be owned, and the truth as it is in Jesus to be avowed.

Of our original depravity, we have already treated; but a few things may yet be added concerning the effects of it; which will assist us in the better understanding of the way whereby the Holy Spirit removes and heals it; and we may observe,—

1. The corrupt principle of sin in our natures begins to operate in very early life. "The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies." Psal. lviii. 3. It is to no purpose to say that men habitually and profligately wicked are here intended; for whatever excesses men may afterwards run into, all are morally alike from the womb. Children are not able to speak as soon as they are born; yet, here they are said to speak lies. It is

* Austin's Confessions, book 4, chap. 1.

therefore the perverse actings of depraved nature in infancy which are intended; for every thing that is irregular,—that does not answer the law of our creation, is a lie: and among the many instances collected by Austin of such irregular actings of nature in its infant state, one is peculiarly remarkable. “By degrees I began to find where I was, and I had certain desires to declare my will to those by whom it might be executed; but I could not. Therefore I would kick and cry vehemently; and when I was not obeyed, either because I was not understood, or because what I wanted would have been hurtful to me, I would fall into a rage with my parents or nurses, and endeavour to strike or hurt them as much as I could; and would revenge myself upon them with crying.” Book i. chap. 6, 7. Those irregular agitations of mind, will, and appetite, which appear in infants,—with the indignation and little self-revenge with which they are accompanied in their disappointments, when all about them do not comply with their inclinations, are from the obliquity of our nature; and are effects of that depraved habit of sin with which it is wholly possessed. God did not thus originally create our nature: a condition worse than that of other creatures; in whose *young ones* there are none of these disorders; but a regular compliance with their natural instinct prevails in them; and as the dying of multitudes of infants, argues the imputation of sin to them, so these irregular actings prove sin inherent in them.

2. With the increase of our natural faculties, and the strength of the members of our bodies, this perverse principle acts with more frequency and success. “Children and youth are vanity.” In childhood and youth the mind exerts itself in all kinds of vain actions, foolish imaginations, froward appetites, and falsehood in words. Austin’s first book of Confessions is an excellent comment on that text; describing, with pathetic complaints, the vanity of youth, and the guilt contracted in it. Some, perhaps, may think that there is no moral evil in these childish innocencies. That good man was of another mind. “This is not innocency,”

saith he; "the same principle and habit of mind carried over to riper age and greater occasions, bring forth greater sins;" and who is there who has a serious reverence of God and a clear conviction of sin, who does not recollect such actings in childhood with shame!

3. These general irregularities are succeeded by actual sins; such as are against the light of nature, the dictates of our consciences, and the influence of those intelligencies of moral good and evil, which are inseparable from our faculties. Among these we may particularly mention *lying*. The first inducement of our nature to sin was by a lie; and there is a kind of lie in every sin. Now this is a sin to which childhood is remarkably addicted. How frequently are children surprised into it on the most trifling occasions! and how often do they endeavour, by premeditated falsehoods, to conceal their faults, that they may escape correction! This, that holy person bewails in himself. "I saw not (O God) into what a gulph of filth I was cast out from before thee; for what was more filthy than I, while, out of love of play and desire of vanities, I deceived teachers and parents with innumerable lies?" The psalmist seems to reflect on this vice of youth, when he prays, "Take from me the way of lying." Of the same nature are these petty thefts, in taking from parents and governors things that are prohibited. "They rob their father or mother, and say it is no transgression." Prov. xxviii. 24. Thus Austin saith: "he sometimes stole from his parents, either to gratify his own sensual appetite, or to give to his companions."

4. Sin gets ground in men as they advance in life. —Concupiscence gains strength with years, and grows in violence as persons arrive to ability for its exercise; the instruments of it in the faculties of the soul, the organs of the senses, and the members of the body becoming every day more serviceable to it, and more apt to comply with its motions. Besides, the objects of lust are now multiplied. Temptations increase with the affairs of life; but especially by that corrupt con-

version which generally abounds : hence many young persons are, one way or other, overtaken with some gross actual sins. That all are not so, is merely the effect of preventing grace.—Hence the apostle says, “Flee youthful lusts :”—such lusts as work effectually and prevail mightily in young persons, if not subdued by the grace of God ; and David, in a sense hereof, prays that God would “not remember the sins of his youth ;” and a reflection on these is often the torment of age. Thus Austin largely confesses his falling into great sins, such as fornication and uncleanness, in the mire whereof he was long detained ; and adds this reason of his humble acknowledgment : “I declare these things, O my God, not unto thee, but before thee to my own race, whatever portion thereof may fall on these my writings. And to what end ? Namely, that every one who shall read these things may consider, out of what great depths we are to cry unto thee.” Now the consequence of men’s falling into such great sins is, that sometimes God takes occasion from them, to awaken their conscience with a deep sense, not of that sin only, but of their other sins also. Thus the great Physician turns poison into medicine ; and obliges men, like the Jews of old when charged with the murder of Christ, to cry out, “Men and brethren what shall we do ?” With others it only proves an entrance into a further pursuit of sin ; the bounds of restraint being broken, break through all remaining obstacles, and run to every excess of riot, and to the utmost distance from God that is recoverable by grace. For

5. A customary course of sinning ensues with many ; who, “being past feeling, have given themselves over to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.” Custom in sin takes away the sense of it ; the course of the world takes away the shame of it ; and love to it makes men greedy in the pursuit of it. Hence are the various courses of sinners in the world, wherein the outrage of some seems to justify the more sedate irregularities of others. Yea, some who are not in a better state towards God than others, will not only start at, but really abhor such excesses. Now this difference

arises, not from nature, which is equally corrupt in all men, but from God's restraining grace, by which he keeps some within those bounds which they shall not pass; while he permits others to fall under such a conjunction of lusts and temptations, that they proceed to all manner of evils. Moreover, there are peculiar inclinations to some sins that are enhanced by the temperature of the body; and some persons are more exposed to temptations from their outward circumstances, whereby some are precipitated to all manner of evil. The old man of sin is the same naturally in all; the difference is from the grace of God.—He secretly prepares for some a better temperature of nature, docile and pliable to such things as may entertain their minds, and keep them from sensual delights: and some he so disposes of, in their education, callings, and societies in the world, to ways inconsistent with open lewdness, which will much balance their inclinations. This is excellently expressed by Austin:—"I will love thee, O God, and thank thee, because thou hast forgiven me my evil deeds. I impute it to thy grace and mercy, that thou hast made my sins to melt away like ice; and I impute it to thy grace as to all the evils which I have not done. For what could I not have done, who loved wickedness for itself! All, I acknowledge, are forgiven me; both the evils that I have done, and what, through thy guidance, I have not done. Who is there who, considering his own weakness, dare ascribe his chastity or innocence to his own strength, that he may less love thee, as though thy mercy were less necessary to him, whereby thou forgivest the sins of them that are converted to thee? For let not him who being called of thee, and having heard thy voice, hath avoided the evils which I have confessed, deride me who, being sick, was healed by that Physician, from whom he received the mercy not to be sick, or not to be so sick."

This brief account of the actings of corrupted nature, until it comes to the utmost of a recoverable alienation from God; may somewhat illustrate the work

of his grace towards us : the method of which we shall now consider,

1. Under the ashes of our fallen nature, there are yet remaining certain sparks of celestial fire, consisting in inbred notices of good and evil, of rewards and punishments, of the presence and all-seeing eye of God, of help to be had from him, with a dread of his power when provoked : and where there are means of instruction from ministers or parents, these are sensibly improved and increased. These notices God often excites in young persons, so that they occasion some regard of and application to him, and therefore are not to be considered as mere effects of nature. Many persons can recollect such divine visitations in their youth. To this purpose Austin tells us, that "he prayed earnestly to God as a refuge, when he was afraid of being beat at school ;" and mentions also some general instruction he received from the Word : and from the same principles, when he was surprised with a fit of sickness, he earnestly desired to be baptized, that so he might, as he thought, go to Heaven ; for his father not being then a Christian, he had not been baptized in his infancy. With the greatest part, these impressions wear off, as they did with him, who afterwards fell into many flagitious sins ; but in some, the Spirit of God by these means inlays the heart with those seeds of grace, which he gradually increases.

2. God works upon men by his Spirit in outward means, to occasion some real steady consideration of him, their distance from him, and their danger of his wrath. It is almost incredible but that daily experience proves it, how men will live under the Word, how they get a form of speaking of God, and of performing religious duties, and yet never come to any steady thoughts of him, or of their concern in his will ! God, therefore, begins here, in order to deliver them from the absolute power of vanity. By one means or other he fixes in their minds some steady thoughts of himself ; as,

(1.) By some sudden amazing judgments, whereby he "reveals his wrath against sin." So Waldo was

affected, when his companion was struck dead as he walked with him in the fields : which proved the occasion of his conversion. So the psalmist describes the thoughts of men when surprised with a storm at sea, an instance of which we have in the mariners of Jonah's ship :—and so that Pharoah, who one day cried “Who is the Lord, that I should obey him ?” Being the next day terrified with thunder and lightning, cried out, “Intreat the Lord for me, that it may be so no more ;” and such impressions from divine power most men experience at one time or other.

(2.) By personal afflictions. Affliction naturally speaks anger ; and anger respects sins ; it is God's messenger to call sin to remembrance. The time of affliction is a time of consideration : and if men are not extremely hardened, they cannot but bethink themselves who sends affliction, and for what end it is sent.

(3.) By remarkable deliverances, as it was with Naaman the Syrian. Unexpected relief from imminent dangers deeply affect the minds of men, convincing them of the power and goodness of God ; and this produces an acknowledgment of their own unworthiness of what they have received, and some temporary effects of gratitude, and submission to the divine will.

(4.) An observation of the conversation of others, has occasioned many persons to inquire into the causes and end of it ; and this inclines them to imitation.

(5.) The preaching or reading of the word of God is the principal means hereof ; this the Holy Spirit employs in his entrance upon this work : it is by the law that men are convinced of sin.

Now there is scarcely any of these instances of the care of God over the souls of men, whom he designs to convert, but the holy person whom we have proposed as an example, gives an account of in his own experience, declaring also by what means they were frustrated, and came to nothing. Such were the warnings that God gave him, by the exhortations of his mother ; such were those which he had in his own sickness, and in the death of his dear friend and companion ; and, in all those warnings, he charges their

non-improvement to his natural blindness, the corruption of his nature, with the efficacy of bad company, and the course of the world in the places where he lived; but it would be tedious to transcribe the particular accounts he gives of these things, though all of them singularly worthy of consideration; for I must say, that, in my judgment, none of our Divines, ancient or modern, have equalled, much less exceeded him, in an accurate observation of all the secret actings of the Spirit of God on the minds of men, both towards, and in their conversion;—and scarcely any one hath so traced the way of the serpent, or the working of original sin in the hearts of men, with the efficacy communicated thereto by temptation, or the various occasions of life. The ways also whereby the deceitfulness of sin seeks to elude and frustrate the work of grace, when it begins to seize the strong-holds of sin in the heart, were wonderfully discovered to him. Nor has any man more expressly displayed the power of victorious grace, with the manner of its operation and prevalence: and all these things, by the guidance of the good Spirit, and attention to the word, are exemplified by his own experience.*

* Neither the character of Augustine, nor the judgment of Dr. Owen concerning him, will be impeached, in the opinion of wise and good men, by the calumnies of the late Mr. Robinson of Cambridge, in his *History of Baptism*; who seems to have dipped his pen in gall when he wrote that chapter, entitled, *Of the Efforts of Augustine to bring in the Baptism of Babes*. “Augustine,” says he, “was not always a saint;” and then proceeds to retail a number of slanderous reports, highly seasoned with his own malicious inuendos. Mr. Robinson accuses him with promoting doctrines which take away all goodness and justice from God and man; and quotes Mr. Bayle, who, from the very slender authority of some of Augustine’s enemies, represents him as “a constant hard drinker;” though the whole passage in his *Confessions*, which is partially quoted to justify this infamous charge, is expressly written to prove that drunkenness was never among his vices, even in his unconverted state. (Book 10. chap. 31.) I shall beg leave to express my sentiments of Mr. Robinson’s conduct in this matter, in the words of two very respectable persons, Dr. Williams, of Rotherham, and the late Rev. Mr. Milner, of Hull, in their letters to me on the subject.

——“Robinson’s character of Augustine is so manifestly uncandid and illiberal, that every intelligent reader must perceive that his own character suffers most by the attempt.—He seems to have been an

In calling men to the saving knowledge of God, the Holy Spirit convinces them of sin. As to the nature of this conviction in general, it consists in fixing the vain mind of a sinner on a due consideration of sin ; and in fixing a due sense of sin on the secure mind of

admirer of Bayle, that prince of sceptical writers ; but, in his scurrility and foul treatment of Augustine, he far surpasses his master. Both master and scholar, instead of acknowledging the power of divine grace, in the conversion of this eminent man, proclaim to all what strangers they were to its efficacy. With malignant pleasure, they dwell on those youthful improprieties of conduct which he himself sets in the strongest light, bewailing them with pungent grief,—but overlook a life of above forty years laboriously employed in the cause of truth and holiness. Similar efforts have been made on the character of Calvin (the Case of Servetus being the ostensible ground) but historical evidence is not yet sufficiently obscured by distance of time to succeed well in this instance. If a man were so far abandoned to scepticism, and a determined opposition to the work of the Spirit of God on the human mind, how easy would it be to draw a similar picture to that of Augustine by Robinson, of Mr. William Perkins, of Mr. Richard Baxter, of Colonel Gardner, of Mr. George Whitefield, and, I may add, of St. Paul himself!

Yours, &c.

E. W."

Another learned and useful writer thus expresses himself:—"I have seen the foul slander of Augustine, from the writer of the History of Baptism. You need be in no pain about it. I can scarcely conceive what the man could mean. For a year or two, while the Lord was striving with Augustine, he sinned and repented, and staggered backward and forward, as is common with real converts. His Confessions describe what he was before conversion ;—very lewd : and no man was more ready than he to say, "By the grace of God I am what I am : " and it is, I had almost said, as easy to find a blot in St. Paul's moral character after conversion, as in Augustine's. I have read a good deal of his writings ; and must say, that there every where appear the strongest marks of sincerity, humility, and piety. I hardly know any uninspired writer equal to him in this respect. Allowance must be made for the superstition of the times in which he lived : and all candid men will do so ; but even when you are obliged to differ with him in opinion, you cannot but admire the piety and goodness of the man.—Robinson represents him as "illiterate ; " but Dr. Doddridge calls him "the learned and pious Augustine ; " but why mention him in particular ? All antiquity, without a dissenting voice, agree in speaking his praise. His *de Civitate Dei* is a marvellous monument of learning and ingenuity : even Gibbon himself says "it was vigorously, and not unskilfully executed." We have Augustine's Life, written by Possidius, a presbyter, who knew him for forty years ; and gives the highest commendations of him. Mosheim speaks very handsomely of his genius and piety. Dr. Lardner, a Socinian, speaks every where respectfully of him. Let any man judge then, what regard is to be paid to Robinson's slanders.

[Ed.]

Yours, &c.

J. MILNER."

the sinner, with affections suited to its apprehensions. The warnings before mentioned are like calls given to a man in a profound sleep ;—he starts and rises up ; but oppressed with the power of sleep, he lies down again to rest, as Austin expresses it ; but this work of conviction remains, and men cannot disentangle themselves from it.

It is a great work to fix the vain mind of an unregenerate man on a due consideration of sin. The darkness and vanity of his mind divert him from it. We daily see this astonishing vanity in our children, servants, and relations : how difficult, how impossible, to fix their minds on the due consideration of sin !—no arguments nor entreaties can prevail :—and “ the strong man armed,” employs all his engines to keep his goods in peace, and prevent this work ; but the Spirit of God fixes the mind on sin : he reproves men, and “ sets their sin in order before their eyes ; so that whichever way they turn, they are obliged to behold it. So that David says, “ My sin is ever before me.” Fain would they cast their sins behind their backs, and get rid of the thoughts of them, but “ the arrows of God” stick fast in their minds.

As the mind is hereby fixed on the consideration of sin, so a sense of sin must also be fixed on the mind, that is, on the conscience. A bare contemplation of sin is of little use. The Scripture places this work of conviction principally in a sense of sin, in trouble, sorrow, fear of ruin, and the like. Now the Holy Ghost is the efficient cause of all this. He alone makes all means effectual to this purpose ; for without his immediate influence, we may hear the law (by which is the knowledge of sin) preached all our lives, and not be once affected with it.

By the way, it well deserves our observation, that God in his holy providence, remarkably over-rules the outward affairs of those whom he designs to call, in a manner conducive to that end. Their inclinations and schemes, or even the disappointment of them ; the places of their abode ; their relation and connections in life, shall all subserve this vast great design. So, par-

ticularly, Austin abounds in his contemplation on the providence of God, in carrying him from Carthage to Rome, and from thence to Milan, where he heard Ambrose preach ; which proved the means of his conversion ; and, in his whole discourse, he excellently shews, on the one hand, the variety of his own projects, which were often perverse ; and, on the other, the constant guidance of Divine Providence, working powerfully through all occurrences towards the blessed end designed for him. "Thou (saith he) who art my hope in the land of the living, that I might remove from one country to another, for the salvation of my soul, didst both apply goads unto me at Carthage, whereby I might be driven from thence, and didst propose allurements unto me at Rome, whereby I might be drawn thither ; and this thou didst by men who loved the dead life in sin ; here, doing things outrageous ; there, promising things desirable to vain minds, whilst thou, to correct and reform my ways, didst secretly make use of their frowardness and mine."

It must be granted that many persons lose all the efficacy of these impressions, and become more profligate in sin than ever. So Austin declares, that, after many stifled convictions, he grew so obdurate, that in a fever, when he thought he should die and go to Hell, he had not that desire for mercy and deliverance which he found many years before in lesser dangers ; and this perverse effect is occasioned by various means. In most, it is the effect of the power of their own lusts ; for these being only checked, not subdued, they gain strength by restraint, and overflow all convictions. One day they seem to lie in Hell, by the terror of convictions ; and the next to be hastening towards it by their sins ; but this apostacy is often promoted by others ; for instance, by such as undertake to be spiritual guides, and to teach men what they never learned, heal their wounds slightly, or turn them out of the way. So it happened to Austin, who, beginning to seek the Lord, fell into the society and heresy of the Manichees, which frustrated all his convictions. Others are hurt by their vain companions, who directly endeavour, with the ut-

most importunity and show of friendship, to draw them back into the world. Thus, the same person declares, with what earnestness some of his companions endeavoured to draw him to the plays and spectacles at Rome. Besides, the awe that is on the minds of men in their convictions, is apt to wear off when the soul is a little accustomed to it, and yet sees no evil actually ensue.

In some, the Holy Spirit is pleased to carry on this work of conviction to a blessed issue. In this case there will follow great conflicts between their corruptions and their convictions, especially in those who have been accustomed to a course of sinning, or to any predominant lust; for the law coming with power to the conscience, requires a relinquishment of all sin, at the eternal peril of the soul. Sin is hereby incited and provoked; and the soul begins to see its disability to conflict with that which before it thought absolutely in its own power. So sin takes occasion by the commandment to work in men all manner of concupiscence; and those who thought themselves to be alive, now find that it is sin which lives, and that themselves are dead. Rom. iii. 7.

But yet these convictions will produce some endeavours and promises of amendment. These are unavoidable, in order to pacify the law, which bids them do so or perish: but such endeavours usually hold only to the next occasion of sin or temptation: the least outward advantage or provocation given to the internal power of sin, slights all such resolutions; and the soul yields itself up to the power of its old ruler. So Austin expresses his own experience after his great convictions, and before his full conversion. "I was bound by no other chain than my own iron will. The enemy held this will of mine; and of it he made the chain which bound me; for from the perverse will, unlawful desire is produced; and by frequent yielding to this desire, a habit is formed; and habit unresisted becomes a kind of necessity; by which, as by united links, he held me fast in grievous bondage;" and he shews how faint and languid his endeavours were for reformation:—"The load of worldly pleasure, as it hap-

pens to persons in sleep, agreeably kept me down; and the thoughts whereby I aspired to thee, were like the feeble motions of such as would awake, who nevertheless being conquered by drowsiness, fall back again into their former slumber;" and he confesses, that though, through the urgency of his convictions he could not but pray to be freed from the power of sin, yet through the prevalence of that power, he had a secret desire not to part with that sin which he prayed against.—"I prayed to thee for chastity; I said, Give me chastity and continence, but do not give it yet; for I was afraid lest thou shouldest hear me too soon, and immediately heal me of that disease of concupiscence which I wished rather to have satiated than extinguished."

These endeavours frequently rise to great perplexity and distress; for, after a while, the soul is torn and divided between the power of corruption and the terror of conviction; and this is occasioned by the renewal of former convictions; and by the secret insinuation of a principle of spiritual life and strength into the will, the nature of which the soul is yet unacquainted with. It was thus with Austin: while he was yet detained under the power of sin, and ready, on every temptation, to revert to his former courses, he occasionally heard Politianus giving an account of the conversion of two eminent courtiers, who immediately renounced the world, and betook themselves wholly to the service of God. This discourse God was pleased to make use of, further to awaken him, and even to amaze him. The substance of what he says is, "That by that discourse of Politianus, God held him to the consideration of himself, caused him to behold his own vileness, till he was horribly perplexed and confounded in himself."

This effect, I say, proceeds from the secret communication of a principle of grace to the will; which being designed to rule in the soul, begins its conflict effectually to eject sin out of the throne; the spirit now begins to "lust against the flesh," aiming at a complete conquest. There was upon bare conviction, a contest between the conscience and the will: but the conflict is

now in the will itself; for grace opposes those habitual inclinations to sin which were before predominant. So it was with Augustine:—"The new will which began to be in me, whereby I would love thee, O my God, was not yet able to overcome my former will, confirmed by long continuance. So my two wills, the one old, the other new; the one carnal, the other spiritual, conflicted between themselves, and rent my soul by their disagreement. Then I understood, by experience, how the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh. I was myself on both sides, but more in that which I approved in myself, than in what I condemned in myself. I was not more in that which I condemned, because, for the most part, I suffered unwillingly what I did willingly."

In this tumult of soul, God oftentimes quiets it by some suitable word of truth in the preaching of the gospel, or by some other means. In the midst of this storm he comes and says "Peace; be still;" communicating with the word some influence of his grace that shall subdue the power of sin, and satisfy the mind in a full resolution for its everlasting relinquishment. Thus it was with him when, like a person distracted, he suffered the terrors of the Lord, sometimes praying, sometimes weeping, sometimes alone, sometimes with his friends, sometimes walking, sometimes lying on the ground, he was, by an unusual occurrence, warned to take up a book and read: the book next him, that of Paul's epistle to the Romans, which taking up and opening, the place he first fixed his eyes upon was,—
"Let us walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." Immediately, on reading these words, an end was put to his perplexing conflict. He found his whole soul, by the power of almighty grace, subdued to the will of God, and fixed in a resolution to cleave to him, and forsake sin, with an assured composure with respect to the success he should have therein, through Jesus Christ. Immediately he related

this, first to his friend, and then to his mother ; which proved the occasion of conversion to the one, and of inexpressible joy to the other. Take the conclusion of the story in his own words :—"Having read these verses, I would read no more ; nor was there any need that I should ; for on the end of that sentence, as if a light of peace or security had been infused into my heart, all darkness of doubts fled away : marking the book with my finger put into it, or by some other sign, I shut it, and with a quiet countenance declared what was done to Alipius. On which he also declared what was at work in himself, whereof I was ignorant. He desired to see what I had read ; which when I had shewed him, he looked further than I had read ; nor did I know what followed ; but it was this,—“Him that is weak in the faith, receive :”—which he applied to himself, and declared to me ; confirmed by this admonition, with a firm purpose and suitable to his manners, wherein he formerly much excelled me, he was united to me without delay. Upon this we go to my mother, and declare what was done ; she rejoiceth ; we make known the manner of it, how it was done : she exulteth and triumpheth, and blesseth thee, O God, who art able to do for us more than we know how to ask or understand.” And these things does the holy man record, as he says, “to repress the swelling pride of mankind.” In the example of Alipius, we perceive how variously God is pleased to effect this work in men ; carrying some through strong convictions and great distresses, before they come to peace ; leading others gently, without any visible disturbances, to the saving knowledge of himself by Jesus Christ.

Another thing which befalls men under this work of conviction, is a dread and fear as to their eternal condition : for,

(1.) Conviction of sin being ordinarily by the law, it is generally accompanied with a deep sense and apprehension of the eternal danger to which the soul is liable on account of the guilt of sin ; for the law comes with its whole power on the conscience. Men may be partial in the law, but the law will not be partial. It

not only convinces by its light, but condemns by its authority, and even "slays the sinner." Rom. vii. 9.

(2.) This apprehension usually occasions disquieting and perplexing affections in the mind; as sorrow and shame. Shame was the first thing wherein conviction of sin discovered itself; and sorrow always accompanies it. Fear of eternal wrath is also usual; this keeps the soul in bondage, and is accompanied with torment. The person so convinced, believes the threatening of the law to be true, and trembles at it; and these are attended with perplexing, unsatisfactory inquiries after ways of deliverance from this present distress and future misery. What shall we do? What shall we do to be saved? is the restless inquiry of such persons. Acts xvi.

(3.) These things will assuredly put the soul on many duties; as prayer, abstinence from sin, and endeavours after a general change of life.

(4.) We do not ascribe these effects to the mere workings of men's passions, on the rational consideration of their state; for these things may be so proposed to men, that they cannot avoid their consideration and the conclusion that follows, and yet not be at all affected; therefore we say that the law is accompanied with a secret virtue from God, called "The Spirit of Bondage," (Rom. viii. 15.) which causes a sense of the curse to impress the mind, and sometimes to fill it with fear and dread; yea, with horror and despair.

(5.) The substance of these things is usually found in those who are converted in adult years, and capable of impressions from external administrations, especially in those who have gone far in open sin; but no certain rule or measure of them can be prescribed as necessary antecedently to conversion; for sorrow and dread are not duties, only they frequently follow conviction of sin, which is a duty; they belong, not to the precept of the law, but to its curse; they are no part of what it requires, but of what it inflicts. Gospel-sorrow, after believing, is a duty;—but this legal sorrow is an effect of the curse of the law, and not of its

command. Observe also that God exercises his sovereignty in this whole matter, and deals with the souls of men in unspeakable variety. Some he leads by the gates of Death and Hell, to rest in his love ; the paths of others he makes plain and easy ; some wander long in darkness ; in the souls of others Christ is formed in the first gracious visitation.

(6.) But though no certain degree of these consequences of conviction is prescribed as previously necessary to conversion, yet two things, in general, are so ;

(1.) Such a conviction of sin, that is, of a state of sin, of a course of sin, and of actual sins, as may fully satisfy the soul that it is thereby obnoxious to the curse of the law and the wrath of God ;—thus, at least, God “concludes, and shuts up under sin,” every one on whom he will have mercy ; for “every mouth must be stopped, and all become guilty before God ;”—without this, no man ever did, or ever will believe in Christ ; for he calls none to him but those who, in some measure, are quite weary or thirsty, or seek deliverance. (2.) A due apprehension and resolved judgment that there is no way within the compass of a man’s own contrivance to find out, or his ability to walk in : nor any other way of God’s appointment, which can deliver the soul from the state it is in, but only that which is proposed in the Gospel by Jesus Christ.

(7.) The duty of a person thus convinced, is to inquire after, and to receive the revelation of Jesus Christ, and the righteousness of God in him. He ought to own the sentence of the law under which he suffers ; justifying God in his holiness, whatever be the issue as to himself. He ought not hastily to believe every thing that may be proposed as the means of relief ; for the fears and superstition of men often present false expedients in this case. The life and soul of Popery consists in contrivances to quiet the guilty conscience ; such as the mass, penances, abstinences, and the like. Indeed, the holy law of God itself, seems to the natural conscience to suggest a kind of legal righteousness, by amendment of life. It is true, that without a sin-

cere desire after obedience, there is no real conversion : but there is a deceit in all these things, as to the end proposed ; and if any amendment of life be leaned upon for that purpose, it will prove a broken reed, and pierce the hand that rests upon it. For though the law require at all times abstinence from sin and amendment of life, yet it does not propose it as that which can deliver the soul from guilt already contracted ; and if it prevail on the mind to accept of its terms to that end, it can only shut up the person under its curse.

It is also the duty of convinced sinners to beware of entangling temptations ; as that they have not attained a sufficient degree of sorrow and humiliation ; for, as we have observed, no certain degrees are prescribed, either in the law or gospel. Others think, that those who persuade them to believe, know not how great sinners they are ; but yet they know that Christ called the greatest ; and we undervalue his grace, by supposing that the greatest sins should disappoint the effect of it, in any who come to him.

The work of conversion is completed by the ingenerating and acting of faith in God by Jesus Christ ; and this we shall consider with all possible brevity and plainness.

(1.) This is the peculiar work of the gospel, and ever was so from the first giving of the promise. "The law came by Moses ; but grace and truth by Jesus Christ." (2.) To this purpose it is necessary that the gospel, that is, the doctrine of it concerning redemption, righteousness, and salvation by Jesus Christ, be declared and made known to sinners. (3.) The declaration of the gospel is accompanied with a revelation of the will of God with respect to faith and obedience. "This is the work of God," the work he requires, "that we believe in him whom he hath sent :"—and this command, to believe in Christ, the gospel teaches us to press from the manifold aggravations which attend the sin of unbelief ; for it is a rejection of the testimony of God concerning Jesus Christ, which is to make him "a liar ;" and it is a contempt of his love and grace to lost sinners, which is the highest provo-

cation that can be offered to the Divine Majesty. (4.) In the declaration of the gospel, Christ is peculiarly proposed, as crucified and lifted up, for the special object of our faith; and this proposition of Christ includes an invitation to all convinced sinners to come to him for life and salvation.—(5.) The end for which Christ is thus proposed to sinners, is also declared; and this is, “To save them from their sins,” or “from the wrath to come.” The Gospel declares, that there is a way yet remaining, whereby they may escape the curse of the law; that this is through the atonement made by Jesus Christ to the justice of God; that God is well-pleased with this atonement; and that it is his will that we should accept of it, and acquiesce in it. (6.) It is promised, that upon believing in Christ, convinced sinners shall be pardoned, and justified, through the imputation to them of what Christ has done and suffered in their stead. (7.) To prevail with men to receive Christ, the Gospel is filled with arguments, invitations, exhortations, and promises, designed to explain and declare the love, grace, and faithfulness of God herein.—(8.) Among these various ways in which God declares his mind and will, he frequently causes some particular word, promise, or passage to fix itself on the mind of a sinner, as in the instance just adduced. Hereby the soul is first excited to exert the faith with which it is endued; and thus men are directed to rest, peace, and consolation. (9.) This acting of faith in Christ is inseparably accompanied with an universal engagement of heart to all holy obedience, with a relinquishment of all known sin, necessarily producing a thorough change and reformation of life. Vain and foolish, therefore, are the reproaches of some, who in a high course of a worldly and profane life, charge others with preaching justification by faith, to the neglect of holiness. Those on whom they thus reflect, unanimously teach, That the faith which does not purify the heart, and reform the life, is not genuine, but empty and dead, and if trusted to, will eternally deceive the souls of men: they also press the indispensable necessity of universal holiness on surer

principles, and with better arguments than any pretended to by those who ignorantly and falsely traduce them. (10.) Those who were thus converted to God in the primitive times, were on their profession hereof admitted into church society, and a participation of its mysteries; and this being the usual way in which they were added to the fellowship of the faithful, it was an effectual means of intense love among them all, on account of their joint interest in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

And this is the second great work of the Spirit of God in the *New Creation*. This is a summary description of his forming the members of Christ's mystical body:—but this whole doctrine is now derided by some among ourselves, though it be known to have been the constant doctrine of the most learned prelates of the church of England: and as the doctrine is exploded, so all experience of it is decried as fanatical and enthusiastic.

To obviate the pride and wantonness of this filthy spirit, I have confirmed the several instances of this

* I shall mention the account of the admission into church-fellowship of Victorinus, a Platonic philosopher, as related to Austin by Simplicianus.

“When the time was come that he was to make profession of his faith, which at Rome used to be done in a certain form of words learnt by heart, and pronounced from an elevated place in the sight of the faithful, it was offered to Victorinus by the elders, that he might make his profession privately, which was an indulgence sometimes granted to the more timid; but he rather chose to profess the faith of his salvation before the whole multitude; for what he had taught in rhetoric, though not the matter of salvation, he had professed in the most public manner. How much less then ought he to fear pronouncing thy holy word before thy meek and humble flock, who had not feared to deliver his own orations before an unruly multitude! As soon therefore as he ascended to make his profession, every one that knew him (and who was there that knew him not?) repeated his name to his next neighbour with the voice of congratulation: and there was a general buz of Victorinus! Victorinus! At once they exulted at the sight of him; and at once they were hushed, in order to hear him. He then declared the true faith with admirable boldness; and all who were present wished to take him into their hearts; which indeed they did by love and joy; for these were the arms with which they embraced him.”—Much of the order, discipline, and fervent love of the primitive Christians in their church societies, may be learnt from this passage.

work with the experience of Augustine ; for as some of the despisers of this doctrine are puffed up with a conceit of their own excellency, to the contempt of all who contradict them, yet, if they should swell themselves till they burst, like the frog in the fable, they would never prevail with their fondest admirers, to admit them into a competition with the immortal wit, grace, and learning of that eminent champion of the truth, and light of the age wherein he lived.

BOOK IV.

THE NATURE OF SANCTIFICATION AND GOSPEL HOLINESS EXPLAINED.

CHAPTER I.

Regeneration carried on by Sanctification.

IN the regeneration and conversion of God's elect, which we have before described, consists the second part of the work of the Holy Spirit in the New Creation.—Nor does he only begin this work, but he continues, preserves, and carries it on to perfection, in their *sanctification*; the nature and effects of which we are now to consider.

Our apostle in his first epistle to the Thessalonians (chap. 5.) having recommended many weighty evangelical duties, closes all with a fervent prayer for them (verse 23.): “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and let your whole spirit, soul and body, be preserved blameless to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:” or, as I had rather read the words, “And God himself, even the God of peace, sanctify you throughout, that your whole spirit, soul and body, may be preserved blameless.” The reason hereof is, because all the graces and duties which he had enjoined, belonged to their sanctification; which though their own duty was not absolutely in their own power, but was a work of God upon them,—therefore, that they might actually comply with his commands, he prays that God would thus sanctify them throughout; and that this shall be accomplished, he assures them from the faithfulness of God (verse 24.): “Faithful is he that calleth you; who will also do it.” Now as this assurance did not arise from any thing peculiar to them, but from the faithfulness of God, it is equal with respect to all who are

effectually called : they shall all infallibly be sanctified throughout, and preserved blameless to the coming of Christ.

The author of this sanctification is here asserted to be God. He is the eternal spring and fountain of all holiness ; there is none in any creature but what comes immediately from him ; and therefore it is so emphatically expressed, even God himself ; if he does it not, no other can ; it must be wrought by God himself. He does it of himself, from his grace ; by himself, or his own power ; for himself, or his own glory : and that under this special consideration, as he is “ the God of peace.”

This title is frequently ascribed to God ; and he is said to sanctify us as the God of peace, because it is a fruit and effect of that peace with himself, which he has made for us by Jesus Christ ; for without respect to this reconciliation, he would no more sanctify us than the fallen angels, for whom no peace or atonement was made. Further ; By the sanctification of our nature and persons, God preserves that peace with himself in exercise : for in the duties and fruits thereof consist all those actings towards him which a state of peace and friendship requires. It is holiness that keeps up a sense of peace with God, and prevents those spiritual breaches which the remainders of our enmity would occasion ; and he is here said to sanctify us (OLOTELEIS) universally ; that is, our whole nature is the subject of this work, and not any one faculty of it ; and it shall be carried on to completeness and perfection. Both these ideas are afterwards expressed ; for the subject of this sanctification he makes to be our whole nature, our entire spirits, souls, and bodies ; and the end of the whole is, the preservation of us blameless in the peace of God to the coming of Christ.

Sanctification, as here described, is the immediate work of God by his Spirit upon our whole nature, proceeding from the peace made for us by Jesus Christ, whereby being changed into his likeness, we are kept entirely in peace with God, and are preserved un-

blameable, or in a state of gracious acceptance with him to the end.

The nature of this work, and its effect, which is our holiness, with the necessity of them both, must be diligently considered. The importance of the truth itself, and the opposition made to it, render this absolutely necessary; indeed, our principal duty in this world is to know aright what it is to be truly holy.

One thing must be premised, viz. That there is a two-fold sanctification spoken of in Scripture: the first is common to persons and things, in their peculiar dedication to the service of God. Thus the priests and Levites, the tabernacle and temple were sanctified; but the other is what we now treat of, wherein this separation is not the first thing done, but an effect of it. This is real and internal, by the communication of a principle of holiness.

This sanctification of the Spirit is peculiarly connected with, and limited to the truth and grace of the Gospel; for holiness is the implanting and realizing of the Gospel in our souls. Hence it is termed (Eph. iv. 24.) (*OSIOTES TES ALETHEIAS*,) *the holiness of truth*;—which the Gospel ingenerates, and which consists in a conformity to it. Thus our Saviour praying for his disciples, says, “Sanctify them in (or by) thy truth; thy word is truth.” John xvii. 17. This alone is that “truth which makes us free from sin and the law, to righteousness in holiness.” It belongs neither to nature nor to the law. Nature is wholly corrupt and contrary to it. The law, indeed, for certain ends, was “given by Moses;” but all “grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” There never was, nor is, nor ever will be the least dram of holiness in the world, but what, flowing from Jesus Christ, is communicated by the Spirit, according to the truth and promise of the Gospel. There may be something like it, as to outward acts and effects; something that wears its livery, that is only the fruit of men’s own endeavours in compliance with their convictions; but holiness it is not, nor of the same nature, though men are very apt to deceive themselves with it. Indeed, there is nothing in the

whole mystery of godliness which corrupt nature does not labour to debase, from the highest crown of it (which is the person of Christ, "God manifested in the flesh") to the lowest effect of his grace. The Lord Christ in his whole person, it would have to be but a mere man;—in his obedience and suffering, to be only an example;—in his doctrine, to be confined to the capacity of carnal reason; and the holiness he communicates by his Spirit, to be nothing but moral virtue. But these low and carnal imaginations are exceedingly unworthy of the grace of Christ, and the glory of the Gospel. Moral virtue is the best thing among men that is of themselves. It far exceeds in worth all that the honours, profits, and pleasures of the world can extend unto; and it is admirable to consider what instructions are given concerning it, what encomiums of its excellency and beauty are bestowed upon it by contemplative heathens, the wisest of whom were ready to acknowledge that there was yet something in it which they could only admire and not comprehend: and very eminent instances of the practice of it were given in the lives of some of them; whose examples of righteousness, temperance, and equanimity in all conditions, now rise up to the shame of many called Christians, and will be called over at the last day, as an aggravation of their condemnation. But to suppose that this moral virtue, however excellent, is that holiness of truth which believers receive by the Spirit of Christ, is to debase and overthrow it, and to drive men from seeking an interest in it. And hence it is that some, pretending great regard to it, yet despise what is really so, pleasing themselves with the empty name, or withered carcase of virtue, every way inferior, as interpreted in their practice, to the righteousness of heathens: and this should excite our diligence in our enquiries after its real nature, that we deceive not ourselves with false appearances to our ruin.

2. It is our duty to inquire into the nature of evangelical holiness, because it is abstruse and mysterious, and indiscernible to the eye of carnal wisdom. We may say of it, as Job of wisdom,—“Whence cometh

wisdom, and where is the place of understanding, seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living?"—Destruction and Death say, we have heard of the fame thereof with our ears—"God understandeth the way, and knoweth the place of it; and to man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding." This is that wisdom whose ways and residence are hidden from the natural reason and understanding of men, and therefore it is no wonder that it is despised as an enthusiastic fancy. Hence it often happens, as it did among the Pharisees, that those who are most zealous for a legal righteousness, walking in a strict attendance to duties, are the most implacable enemies of true evangelical holiness. They know it not, and therefore hate it; they have embraced something else in its place, and therefore despise and persecute it.

3. Believers themselves are often much unacquainted with it, either as to their apprehension of its true nature, causes, and effects, or at least as to their own interest in it. As we know not of ourselves the "things that are wrought in us by the Spirit of God," so we seldom attend as we ought to his instruction of us in them. It may indeed seem strange, that as all believers are sanctified, they should not understand what is wrought and abides in them; but, alas! how little do we know of ourselves, of what we are, and whence are our natural powers and faculties! How little do we know of these souls of ours!—and what we do know, is by their operations. Is it strange then that we should be much in the dark as to this new nature, which is from above, and with which our natural reason has no acquaintance? It is new, it is wonderful, it is a work supernatural; and is known only by supernatural revelation.

4. We must also consider, that holiness is not confined to this life, but passes over into eternity and glory. Death has no power to destroy it, or divest us of it. Its acts indeed are transient, but its fruits abide for ever in their reward. They who die in the Lord rest from their labours, "and their works follow them."

"God is not unrighteous to forget their labour of love." There is not the least fruit of holiness,—“giving a cup of cold water to a disciple of Christ,” but it shall be had in everlasting remembrance. Nothing shall be lost; but all the fragments shall be gathered up, and kept safe for ever. Every thing else in this world, however specious, shall be consumed as “hay and stubble;” when the meanest, the most secret fruit of holiness, shall be gathered as “gold and silver” into God’s treasury. Let no soul fear the loss of any labour in the duties of holiness, in the most secret contest for inward purity, for outward fruitfulness in the mortification of sin, resistance of temptations in self denial,—all that you know, and what you do not know, shall be called over, and abide eternally in its reward.

But this is not all. Holiness will abide forever in its principle. It is true, some gifts shall be done away as useless in a state of glory; and some graces shall cease as to some special acts, as faith and hope, as far as they respect future and unseen things; but all those graces in which holiness consists, shall, in their present nature, improved into perfection, abide for ever. In our knowledge of them, we have our principal insight into our eternal condition in glory; and this is a firm foundation of consolation, and a part of our chiefest joy in this world. Is it not a matter of unspeakable refreshment that these poor bodies, after they have been made a prey to death, dust, worms, and corruption, shall be restored to life and immortality, freed from sickness, weakness, and weariness, and vested with qualities like those of Christ’s glorious body, which yet we understand not? Is it not unspeakable joy, to think that these souls shall be delivered from all their darkness, instability, and alienation from spiritual things? But this is not all. Our poor low graces shall be continued, purified, and perfected.—That love whereby we now adhere to God as our chiefest good; that faith whereby we are united to Christ our everlasting Head; that delight in the ways and ordinances of God, wherein his presence is enjoyed; that affection which we have

for all in whom we see the image of Christ ; with the entire principle of spiritual life which is now in us, shall all be purified, perfected, and pass into glory. That very holiness which we here attain, those inclinations and dispositions of mind, those powers and abilities in obedience and adherence to God, which now contend with the weight of their own weakness and imperfections, shall be gloriously perfected in immutable habits, unchangeably acting our souls in the enjoyment of God ; and this also shews us how much it concerns us to be well acquainted with the doctrine of sanctification, and, above all, to be really interested in it.

5. There is a spiritual and heavenly glory in it in this world. Hence the Church, the king's daughter, is said to be all "glorious within;" her inward adorning with the graces of the Spirit, is called Glory ; and the progress of believers in holiness, is called their being "changed from glory to glory;"—from one degree of glorious grace to another. As this, next to the comeliness of Christ's righteousness put upon us, is our only beauty in the sight of God, so it has a real spiritual glory in it ; it is the first fruits of heaven ; it is a ray of eternal light ; a principle of eternal life, and the entire nature of that love, whereby we shall eternally adhere to God.

6. This is that which God indispensably requires of us ; and indeed it is all that he requires, for it comprises the whole duty of man ; and this surely renders it needful for us both to know what it is, and diligently to seek a participation of it ; for what servant, who has any sense of his relation and duty, if he know that his master requires but one thing of him, will not endeavour to be acquainted with it, and to perform it !

But we are by no means to suppose that God requires this holiness of us, that we may thereby make an atonement for our sins, though this principle is deeply rooted in our nature, and has been the source of amazing superstitions both among the Heathens and the Papists ; nor is this required, that it may become our righteousness for our justification in future ; for we are justified freely by grace, through the redemption that is in

Christ," and not by works ;—nor is it required that thereby we should merit life ; for all that we can do is no more than our duty, and even that cannot be performed but by grace ; and eternal life is the free gift of God, and not a reward of debt. Much less is holiness required, that by doing more than our duty we should supererogate in the behalf of others ; which monstrous fiction of the Church of Rome exceeds all the Pharisaism of the Jews.

Carnal Reason indeed concludes, That if what God requires be not necessary on one of these accounts, it is not necessary at all ; nor can it conceive why good works should be performed, unless they are in some degree meritorious ; for it has no regard to the authority of his command ; nor to the necessity of the renovation of his image in us, in order to communion with him here, and enjoyment of him in glory ; nor to his wisdom in appointing holy obedience, as the means of expressing our gratitude to him, and of glorifying him in the world ; but the first true saving light that shines by the gospel into our souls, begins to undeceive us in this matter ; and there is no greater evidence of our receiving an evangelical baptism into the spirit of the gospel, than the clear compliance of our minds with the wisdom of God herein.

7. But besides the command of God, we are to consider the precious promises he has made to perform this good work in us. He who requires it of us, knows that we have it not in ourselves. Now God has multiplied his promises to this purpose :—He has said "I will take away the heart of stone, and give you a heart of flesh,—a new heart will I give you,—a new spirit I will put within you,—I will write my law in your heart,—I will put my fear in your heart,—and cause you to walk in my statutes, and keep my judgments." Jer. xxxi. 33, &c.—The whole of our sanctification is comprised in these promises. To be cleansed from the defilements of sin, to have a heart inclined always to fear God, and to walk in his ways accordingly, is to be sanctified, or to be holy ; and all this God promises directly to work in us.

And here we may digress a little, to consider what regard we ought to have to the command on the one hand, and to the promise on the other ; to our own duty, and to the grace of God. Some would separate these things as inconsistent. A command, they suppose, leaves no room for a promise ; and a promise, they think, takes off the influencing authority of a command. If holiness be our duty, there is no room for grace ; and if it be an effect of grace, there is no place for duty : but all these arguments are a fruit of the "wisdom of the flesh ;" the "wisdom that is from above" teacheth us other things. It is true, that works and grace are opposed in the matter of justification as utterly inconsistent : "If it be of works, it is not of grace ; and if it be of grace, it is not of works ;" but our duty and God's grace are no where opposed in the matter of sanctification ; for the one supposes the other. Neither can we perform our duty herein without the grace of God ; nor does God give us his grace for any other end than that we may rightly perform our duty. He who denies either that God commands us to be holy in a way of duty, or promises to work holiness in us in a way of grace, may with as much modesty reject the whole Bible. Both these, therefore, we must duly regard, if we intend to be holy. In our regard to the *command*, our consciences must be affected with the authority of it, as the command of God ; for holiness is obedience, and obedience respects the authority of the command. We must also see and understand the reasonableness and advantage of the command. Our service is a reasonable service ; and in keeping his commands there is great reward ; and hence we delight in it as holy, just, and good, because the things it requires are equal, easy, and pleasant to the new nature ; and we have a due regard to the *promise*, when (1.) We walk in a constant sense of our own inability to comply with the command from any power in ourselves ; for "our sufficiency is of God." (2.) When we adore that grace which has provided help and relief for us. (3.) When we act faith in prayer and expectation on the promise for supplies of grace for all

holy obedience ;—and (4.) When we have a special regard to it in particular temptations and particular duties ; when on such occasions we do not satisfy ourselves with respect to the promise in general, but exercise faith on it in particular for assistance.

8. To come yet nearer to our principal design, I say it is the Holy Ghost who is the immediate sanctifier of all believers, and the Author of all their holiness. I suppose I need not insist on the confirmation of this assertion ; I have before proved that he is the immediate Dispenser of all divine grace ; besides, it is such an avowed principle in general, that “the Holy Ghost is the Sanctifier of all God’s elect ;” that as it is not questioned, so it need not be further proved.

CHAPTER II.

Sanctification a Progressive Work.

HAVING considered several things relating to sanctification in general, I shall, in the next place, give a description of it, and then explain it more particularly.

Sanctification is an immediate work of the Spirit of God on the souls of believers, purifying their natures from the pollution of sin, renewing in them the image of God, and thereby enabling them, from a spiritual and habitual principle of grace, to yield obedience to God, according to the tenour of the new covenant, by virtue of the life and death of Jesus Christ.

I shall take up this general description, and in the consideration of its parts give some account of the true nature and effects of this work, especially wherein it is opposed or called in question.

It was before proved to be the work of the Spirit of God, a real, internal, powerful work, in and on the souls of believers ; and it differs from regeneration, chiefly on account of the manner of its being wrought. The work of regeneration is instantaneous, consisting in one single creating act ; hence it is not capable of degrees ; no one is more or less regenerate than ano-

ther ; but sanctification is progressive, and admits of degrees ; one may be more sanctified than another who is truly sanctified ; it is begun at once, and carried on gradually.

Increase in holiness, is frequently in the Scripture enjoined on us, and promised to us ; so speaks the apostle Peter (2d Epistle, iii. 18.) " Fall not,"—be not cast down, " from your own steadfastness ; but grow, or increase, in grace." It is not enough that we do not decay in our spiritual condition, but an endeavour after an improvement, an increase in grace, is required of us ; and this is much commended in the Thessalonians (2d Epist. i. 3.) namely, the " exceeding growth of their faith, and abounding of their love." This is called " increasing with the increase of God" (Col. ii. 19.) or that increase in holiness which God requires, accepts, and approves.

The work of holiness in its beginning is but like the seed cast into the earth ; being cherished and nourished, it is in its nature to take root, to spring up, and to bring forth fruit. It is thus with the seed of God, the principle of holiness. It is small at first ; but being received in good and honest hearts, made so by the Spirit of God, and there nourished and cherished, it takes root, and produces fruit : and both these, the first planting and the increase, are equally of the Spirit ; he who begins this " good work, performs it to the day of Christ : " and this he does two ways.

First. By strengthening and increasing those graces we have received and exercised. There are some graces whose exercise does not depend on any outward occasions, but are absolutely necessary, and that in their actual exercise, to the least degree of the life of God ; such are faith and love. These graces are capable of degrees, and therefore of increase. We read of little and great faith, weak and strong faith ; both true, and the same in substance, but differing in degrees. There is also fervent love, and that which is comparatively cold. These graces, then, are gradually increased in the work of sanctification. So the disciples prayed our Saviour to " increase their faith ;"—to add to its

light, multiply its acts, and make it strong against all assaults ; and the apostle prays for the Ephesians, "that they may be rooted and grounded in love ; that is, that by the increase of their love, they may be more established in all the duties of it. Now the Holy Spirit strengthens these graces.

1. By exciting them to frequent actings. They grow and thrive by exercise ; and the Spirit of God excites them ; by seasonably presenting their proper objects ; particularly in the preaching of the word, and other ordinances of worship. God in Christ, the promises of the covenant, and other proper objects of faith, and love being proposed to us, these graces are drawn out into exercise. This is one principal advantage we derive from the dispensation of the word ; and we are greatly mistaken if we think that we have no benefit from the word beyond what we retain in our memories (though we should labour for that too) ; our chief advantage is in this, that faith, love, and other graces, are excited to their proper exercise ; without this they would decay and wither ; but thus they are kept alive ; and thus the Holy Spirit "takes the things of Christ, and shews them to us," and "brings to remembrance" what he has spoken. Herein lies the secret profiting of believers under the Gospel, which perhaps they are not sensible of themselves. By this means many thousand acts of faith and love are drawn forth ; those graces themselves are strengthened ; and consequently holiness is increased. He does it really and internally. All the graces are called "the fruits of the Spirit ;" he brings them forth from the stock that he has planted in the heart ; and we cannot act any one grace without his effectual operation therein ; "God worketh in us both to will and to do." The Spirit, dwelling in believers, effectually excites their graces to frequent exercise, and so increases and strengthens them ; and therefore we ought to be exceedingly careful that we grieve not this good Spirit, and to provoke him to withhold his gracious assistance from us.

2. The Holy Spirit carries on the work of sanctification by supplying believers with experience of the

truth, reality, and excellency of the things believed. Experience is the food of all grace, which it grows and thrives upon. Every taste that faith obtains of divine love and grace, adds to its measure and stature. Hence God expostulates with the church, as to the weakness of her faith, after so much experience of his power and faithfulness:—"Hast thou not heard, hast thou not known?—How then sayest thou that God has forsaken thee?" And our apostle affirms, That the consolations he had experimentally received from God, enabled him to discharge his duty towards others in trouble;—for herein "we prove," or really approve of, as being satisfied in "the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." How often does David encourage his own faith and others, from his former experiences! which were also pleaded by Christ himself, to the same purpose, in his great distress. Now, it is the Holy Ghost who gives us all our spiritual experiences; it is his office to administer consolation, as the great Comforter of the church; and he administers it, by giving to believers a spiritual, sensible experience of the reality and power of the things believed. Other means of spiritual consolation I know not; and I am sure this never fails. Give the soul a taste of the love and grace of God in Christ Jesus, and be its condition what it may, it cannot refuse to be comforted; and hereby he "sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts," by which all graces are cherished and increased.

3. He doth it by working immediately an actual increase of these graces in us; as he first creates them, so he increases them. Hereby the "feeble become as David:" those whose graces were weak, whose faith was infirm, and whose love was languid, become, by the supplies of the Spirit, strong and vigorous.

Secondly. There are graces whose exercise is more occasional;—it is not necessary that they should be always in actual exercise, as faith and love are to be. With respect to these, holiness is increased by the addition of one to another, till we are brought on several occasions to the practice of them all; and the wise providence of God renders our relations, afflictions,

temptations, enjoyments, and all occurrences subservient to this end. This is given us in charge, "Besides all this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity." 2 Pet. i. 5, 6, 7. To this purpose are the promises given, and a divine nature imparted. But will that suffice? or, Is nothing more required of us to that end? "Yes," saith the apostle, "Use your utmost diligence to add the exercise of all graces one to another, as occasion requires;" and this addition is from the Holy Ghost; for he so orders our affairs, that the exercise of these graces shall become necessary. All the afflictions of the church have this design; hence the apostle James says, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trial of your faith worketh patience; but let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." All our trials are under the direction of Christ, by his Spirit; and they are to this end, that faith may be exercised, patience employed, and one grace added to another. In this state of things, he effectually reminds us of our duty, and what graces ought to be exercised. We may dispute whether it be better to act faith, or to despond; to exercise patience under continued trials, or irregularly to seek deliverance: then he causes us "to hear a word behind us, saying, This is the way, walk in it, when we turn to the right hand, and when we turn to the left." When we are at a loss, and know not what to do, and are ready perhaps to "consult with flesh and blood," he speaks effectually to us, saying, "No; that is not your way; but this is, namely, to act faith, patience, and submission to God." Now this is the work of the Spirit, who not only bestows in regeneration a nature capable of growth, but affords actual supplies for its increase. "I, the Lord, water it every moment;" and the Spirit is this water. God the Father takes upon him the care of his vineyard: "I the Lord do keep it night and day." The Lord Christ is the Foun-

tain of all supplies ; and the Spirit is the efficient cause, communicating them to us from him. Hence it is that any grace is kept alive one moment, that it is ever acted in a single duty, or that it ever receives the least increase. With respect to all these, our apostle says, " I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Spiritual life, in all the acts of it, is immediately from Christ.

There is no man who has any true grace, but the Spirit, by his care over it, and supplies of it, is able to preserve it, to free it from opposition, and to increase it to its full measure and perfection ;—wherefore, " let the hands that hang down be lifted up, and the feeble knees be strengthened:" we have to do with him who " will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax ;" and on the other hand, no one has received such a measure of grace, that he can preserve it one moment, or act it in one instance, without the constant supplies of the Spirit ; for " without him we can do nothing." Wherefore God has so ordered the dispensation of his grace to believers, that all of them living on the supplies of his Spirit, can have no cause on the one hand to faint, nor on the other to glory in themselves : there is ground of faith given to all, and occasion of presumption administered to none.

I shall close the discourse on this subject, with some consideration of that similitude by which the Scripture so frequently represents the gradual improvement of grace and holiness ; and this is the growth of trees and plants. " I will be as the dew unto Israel ; he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon : his branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive-tree, and his smell as Lebanon." Hos. xiv. 5, 6. " I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring ; and they shall spring up as among the grass, as the willows by the water-courses." Isa. xlv. 3, 4.

(1.) These trees and plants have the principle of their growth in themselves. They do not grow immediately from external aid, but from their own seminal virtue. It is thus in the progress of holiness : it has a root, a seed, a principle of growth in the soul. All

grace is immortal seed, and contains in it a living growing principle :—that which has not in itself a life and power of growth, is not grace ; and therefore whatever duties men perform, as directed by mere natural light, if they proceed not from a principle of spiritual life in the heart, they are not fruits of holiness. (2.) A tree or plant must be watered from above, or it will not thrive by virtue of its own seminal power ; if a drought come, it will wither or decay. Wherefore God ascribes this growth to his own watering : “ I will be as the dew,” and “ I will pour water,” is the special cause of it : and this God does by the actual supplies of the Spirit. (3.) The growth of trees and plants is secret and imperceptible, and discerned only in the effects of it ; the most watchful eye can discern little of its motion, and so it is in the progress of holiness. It is not immediately discernible either by those in whom it is, or by others who observe it, except by its fruits and effects. Some indeed, especially at times, do evidently thrive and grow, springing up like the “ willows by the water-courses ;” though their growth in itself is indiscernible, yet it is plain they have grown. Such we ought all to be : and as some affirm that the growth of plants is by sudden gusts and motions (which may sometimes be discerned in the opening of buds and flowers) so the growth of believers consists principally in some vigorous actings of grace on great occasions, as of faith, love, humility, and bounty. Again : There are trees and plants that have a principle of life in them, but yet are so withering and unthrifty, that you can only discern them to be alive ; and so it is with too many believers ; they are all trees planted in the garden of God ; some thrive, some decay for a season ; but the growth of the best is secret.

It is evident, therefore, that sanctification is a progressive work. It is not completed in us at once, as regeneration is, nor does it cease under any attainments. A river, continually fed by a living fountain, may as soon end its streams before it come to the ocean, as a stop be put to the course of grace before it issue in glo-

ry; for "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day:"—the morning-light may be clouded for a time, yet fails not till it arrive at perfection; and thus it is with their path who are led by the Spirit; and as the wisdom, patience, and power of the Spirit herein are unutterable, so they are constantly admired by those who are interested in them. Who is there that has made any diligent observation of his own heart, and what have been the workings of grace within, to bring him to his present stature and measure, who does not admire the watchful care and powerful operations of the Spirit of God! The principle of holiness, as in us, is weak and infirm, because it is in us; this he preserves and cherishes, that it shall not be overpowered by corruptions and temptations. Among all the glorious works of God, next to that of redemption by Jesus Christ, my soul most admires this of the Spirit in preserving the principle of holiness in us, as a spark of living fire in the midst of the ocean, against all corruptions and temptations whereby it is opposed. Many breaches are made on the course of our obedience by the incursions of actual sins; these he cures and makes up, healing our backslidings and repairing our decays. He loses much of the comfort of a spiritual life who does not diligently observe the means of its preservation; and it is no small part of our sin and folly when we are negligent herein.

All believers are, no doubt, in some measure convinced of this, both from Scripture and experience; and there is nothing from which they may more distinctly learn it than the workings of their minds in prayer. It is "the Spirit of grace and supplication" who enables them to pray; he copies out and expresses what he works in them, as the Spirit of Sanctification: and if we wisely consider his working in our hearts by prayer, we may understand much of his working upon our hearts by grace. Now how does the Holy Spirit teach us to pray? It is (1.) By giving us a spiritual insight into the promises of God, and the grace of the covenant, whereby we know what to ask. (2.) By ac-

quainting us with our wants, and giving us such a deep sense of them, as we cannot bear without relief. (2.) By stirring up desires in the new creature for its own preservation, increase, and improvement. Answerable to these things is his whole work of sanctification; for it is his effectual communication of the grace and mercy prepared in the promises of the covenant, through Jesus Christ; hereby he supplies our spiritual wants, and sets the new creature in life and vigour. Thus are our prayers an extract or copy of the Spirit's work given us by himself. Now what is it that you chiefly labour about in prayer? Is it not "that the body of sin" may be weakened, subdued, and at length destroyed? Is it not that all the graces of the Spirit may be daily renewed, increased, and strengthened? And what is all this, but that holiness may be gradually progressive in your^s souls till it come to perfection?

It may be said by some, that they neither find in themselves, nor observe in others, that the work of sanctification is constantly progressive; they have found grace more vigorous in former days than of late. Hence the complaints among many of their leanness, deadness, and barrenness: "O that it were with us as in our former days, in the days of our youth!" I shall so far consider and remove this objection, as that the truth we have asserted may not suffer from it, nor those remain discouraged who do not come up to a full compliance with it.—Observe then,

(1.) What grace in its own nature tends to, and what is the Spirit's ordinary procedure in sanctification, is one thing; but what may fall out by indisposition, irregularity, or any other obstruction in the subjects of this work, is another. Under the first consideration, the work is thriving and progressive; in the latter, the rule is liable to exceptions. A child who has a good constitution and proper food, will grow and thrive; but one who has inward obstructions and diseases, or falls and bruises, may be weak and thriftless. When we are regenerate, we are as new-born babes; and generally, if we have the "sincere milk of the word," we "shall grow thereby;" but if we give

way to temptations, corruptions, negligence, or conformity to the world, is it any wonder that we are lifeless and thriftless? It suffices to confirm the truth asserted, that if the work of sanctification be not gradually carried on in every one where it is begun, it is generally from his own sinful negligence; indulgence to carnal lusts, or love of this present evil world.

(2.) It is one thing to have holiness really thriving in any soul,—another for that soul to know it; and these may be separated.

But before I name the reasons hereof, I must premise a necessary caution, which is, That as this rule is proposed for the relief of such as are at a loss about their condition, those persons have no concern in it who may at any time, if they please, find how it is with them: for if they indulge any predominant lust, if they live in the neglect of any known duty, or the practice of any way of deceit; if they suffer the world to devour the choicest increase of their souls, or formality to eat out the life of their duties,—I have nothing to offer to them; to manifest that holiness may thrive though they discern it not; for undoubtedly it does not, but will decay more and more. Such are to be awakened with violence, like men falling into a deadly lethargy; to be snatched as brands out of the fire, lest their end should be darkness and sorrow for evermore.

But as to those who walk with God humbly and sincerely, several reasons may be given, to shew that holiness may be thriving in them, and yet be undiscerned by themselves; for it being the subject of so many gospel-promises, it is a proper object of faith, or a thing to be believed. The promises are God's explanation of the covenant; and their accomplishment depends on God's faithfulness, and not on our sense of it. Where therefore we do not openly lay an obstruction against it, we may and ought to believe that they are fulfilled to us, though we are not continually sensible thereof. Again: It is our duty to grow in holiness; and what God requires of us, we are to believe that he will help us in, and does so, what-

ever be our present apprehension; and he who, on these grounds, can believe the growth of holiness in himself, though he have no sensible experience thereof, is, in my judgment, in as good, and perhaps in a more safe condition, than he who through the vigorous working of spiritual affections is most sensible of it; for it is certain that such a one does not wilfully obstruct the growth of holiness; nor is he in danger of a vain elation of mind, and carelessness thereon, as others may be; for when we live by faith, and not at all by sense, we shall be humble, and fear always: such a one not finding in himself the evidence of what he most desires, will be continually careful that he drive it not further from him.

One reason of this difficulty is, That the work itself is secret and mysterious, as we said before; and therefore, as in some there is the reality and essence of holiness, who yet can find nothing of it in themselves,—so it may in the same secret manner thrive, as to its degrees, in them who perceive it not; and hence, as it is in the growth of plants, though we plainly perceive that the thriving ones have grown, yet we cannot discern their growing; and, as the apostle tells us, that as the “outward man perisheth, so the inward man is renewed day by day.” The perishing of the outward man is by those natural decays whereby it continually tends to dissolution; yet those decays are sometimes almost insensible; we rather know that we are enfeebled, than perceive when or how. So is the inward man renewed by grace; it is by such secret means that its growth or decay is with difficulty perceived; and yet he who is negligent in this enquiry, walks at all peradventures with God; knows not whereabout he is in his way, whether he be nearer or further off from his journey’s end than before. Write that man a fruitless and a thriftless Christian, who calls not himself to an account about his increase or decay in grace.

Again: Perplexing temptations or strong corruptions may so disturb the soul, that it may not be able to form a right judgment of its progress. A ship at sea may be so tossed by a storm, that the most skilful

mariners may be unable to discern whether they make any way, while, perhaps, they are carried on with success and speed. In such cases, grace is engaged chiefly in opposition to its enemy, and so its thriving in other respects is not discernible. If it be asked, How may we know that grace thrives in opposition to corruptions and temptations? I say that as great winds sometimes contribute to the fruit-bearing of trees, so do corruptions and temptations to the fruitfulness of grace. The wind comes with violence on the tree, ruffles its boughs, beats off its buds, shakes its root, and threatens to destroy the whole; but by this means the earth is loosed about it, and the tree gets deeper rooted, which renders it more fruitful, though it bring not forth fruit visibly till a good while after. In the assaults of temptation and corruption the soul is woefully ruffled; but in the mean time it secretly casts out its roots of humility and self-abasement in constant labouring of faith and love, after that grace whereby holiness really increases, and way is made for future visible fruitfulness; for God, who in infinite wisdom manages the whole life of grace by his Spirit, so changes the operations of it, that we cannot easily trace his paths. The work of grace, perhaps, has greatly evinced itself in the affections; hence persons experience great readiness to, and great delight in holy duties; for affections are generally vigorous in the youth of profession; but the Lord may see good to turn the streams of grace into another channel. He sees that the exercise of humility, godly sorrow, diligent conflicting with temptations, are more needful: he will therefore so order his dispensations, by afflictions, temptations, or occasions of life, that they shall have new work to do, and their grace be turned into a new exercise. Hereon, it may be, they find not the same sensible vigour in their affections as formerly; and hence are ready to conclude that grace is decayed, but yet the real work of sanctification is thriving and effectually carried on.

(3.) It is admitted that there are in many persons great decays in grace and holiness, and that for a long

season. This the Scripture abundantly testifies, and the experience of our day sufficiently confirms. Shall we say then that there is no real holiness where such decays are found? God forbid! but we must examine how this comes to pass, seeing it is so contrary to the gradual progress of holiness, which we have asserted. Observe then, that these decays are occasional and pre-ter-natural; they are diseases in our spiritual state, which it must not be measured by. Are you dead and cold in duties, backward to good works, careless of your hearts, addicted to the world? These things belong not to the state of sanctification, but sicknesses and diseases in your spiritual constitution; and though our growth in holiness be a work of the Holy Spirit, as the efficient cause of it, yet it is our own work also in a way of duty. He has prescribed to us what he expects from us, that the work may be regularly carried on to perfection, the omission of which will obstruct its progress; but if we indulge any actings of sin, especially when known and grown frequent, there will be an universal decay. A disease in any vital part of the body, weakens not that part alone, but vitiates the whole constitution; so any particular lust indulged, vitiates the whole spiritual health, and weakens the soul in all the duties of obedience. Besides, there are some things required of us, that holiness may thrive; such are the constant use of means and ordinances appointed to that end; a due observance of commanded duties in their season; with a readiness for the exercise of every special grace in its proper circumstances: now, if we neglect these things, attending neither to means nor duties, nor to the exercise of grace, we are not to wonder if we find ourselves decaying, yea, "ready to die."

Having vindicated this assertion, I shall add a short improvement of it.

If the work of holiness be such a progressive thriving work in its own nature; if the design of the Holy Spirit in the use of means be to increase it more and more, then is our diligence still to be continued to the same end and purpose. It is required that we give "all diligence" to the increase of grace (2 Pet. i.);

and not only so, but that we shew "the same diligence even to the end." Heb. vi. 11. If we grow slack, or give over as to our duty, the work of sanctification will not be carried on in a way of grace. There are three grounds on which some neglect this duty.

1. A presumption that they are already perfect. This some pretend to in a proud and foolish conceit, destructive of the whole nature and duty of evangelical holiness, which on our part consists in our willing compliance with the work of grace gradually carried on to the measure appointed for us. If this be already attained, there is an end of all evangelical obedience, and men return again to the law to their ruin. (See Phil. iii. 12, 13, 14.) It is an excellent description of the nature of our obedience which the apostle gives us in that place. All absolute perfection in this life is rejected as unattainable. The end proposed is blessedness and glory: and the way to it is by a continual following after, pressing towards, reaching out:—a constant progress by our utmost diligence.

2. A foolish supposition, that being in a state of grace, we need not now be so solicitous about exact holiness as we formerly were, when in suspense respecting our condition. But if this persuasion prevails in any person, and influences him, he has cause deeply to question whether he has yet any grace at all. "This persuasion is not of him who hath called us." There is not a more effectual engine in the hands of Satan to keep us off from holiness, nor can any thought arise in the human heart more opposite to the nature of grace; for which reason the apostle rejects it with detestation Rom. vi. 1, 2.

3. Weariness and despondency arising from opposition. Some find so much difficulty in, and opposition to holiness, from corruptions, temptations, and the affairs of the world, that they are ready to faint and give it up. But the Scripture so abounds with encouragements to such persons, that we need not here insist upon them.

CHAPTER III.

Believers the only Object of Sanctification, and Subject of Holiness.

THAT which we are next to enquire into, is the personal subject of this work of sanctification, or what sort of persons are made holy. Now these are all believers and believers only. All who unfeignedly believe in God through Jesus Christ, are sanctified, and no other. It is for them, and them only, that our Saviour prays for this grace, "Sanctify them by thy truth" (John xvii. 17.) and it is also his promise to them:—"He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive." John vii. 38, 39.

1. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Heb. xi. 6. Now holiness, wherever it is, pleases God; and therefore without faith it is impossible we should have any interest in it. All that pleases God in us is our holiness, or some part of it; and it principally consists in an opposition to all that displeases him. That which he commands pleases him, and all that which he forbids displeases him; and our holiness consists in a compliance with the one, and an opposition to the other. Wherefore, that any others but believers should have any thing that really belongs to this holiness, the apostle declares it to be impossible.

2. Jesus Christ affirms that men are sanctified by the faith that is in him: "That they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by the faith that is in me." Acts xxvi. 18. If there were any other way or means whereby men might be sanctified, or made holy, he would not have confined it to the faith that is in him.

3. Faith is the instrumental cause of our sanctification. "God purifies our hearts by faith," (Acts xv. 9.) and not otherwise; and where the heart is not purified, there is no holiness. All the duties in the world will not denominate him holy whose heart is not purified;

nor will any such duties be holy themselves ; for to "the unclean all things are unclean." All the obedience that is accepted of God, is "the obedience of faith;" thence it springs, and thereby it is animated. So it is expressed :—"You who by Christ do believe in God, and have purified your souls in obeying the truth, through the Spirit." 1 Pet. i. 21.

4. All grace is originally entrusted in and with Jesus Christ. The image of God being lost in Adam, whatever was prepared for the renovation of it, was treasured up in him, as the second Adam. "It pleased the Father that in him all fulness should dwell, that of his fulness we might receive grace for grace;" and we receive nothing from him but by virtue of relation to him, or union with him. "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine,—no more can we, except we abide in him." Now our being and abiding in Christ is by faith; without which we can derive nothing from him, and consequently never be partakers of holiness in the least degree. It is therefore undeniably evident, that believers only are sanctified and holy.

And hence we may detect many pernicious mistakes about this matter, both notional and practical; for there are some who would carry holiness beyond the bounds of a special relation to Christ, or that relation beyond the only bond of it, which is faith; for they would have it to be no more than moral honesty, or virtue, and so cannot with any modesty deny it to those heathens who endeavoured after it according to the light of nature; and what need then is there of Jesus Christ? I commend moral virtues as much as any man ought to do, and am sure there is no grace where they are not; yet to make any thing to be our holiness that is not derived from Christ, I know not what I more abhor. Such an imagination dethrones Christ from his glory, and overthrows the Gospel.

Others proceed much further. They have notions of good and evil by the light of nature; these are improved by convictions from the law, and produce great effects; for where the soul is once effectually convinced

of sin, it cannot but seek deliverance. These convictions are still more improved, according to the means of knowledge men enjoy, or the errors and superstitions they embrace. From the latter proceed penances, vows, uncommanded abstinences, and other painful duties. Where the light received is in general according to truth, it will engage men to a reformation of life, a multiplication of duties, abstinence from sin, and a zealous profession of religion in one way or another. Such persons may have good hopes that they are holy, may appear to the world to be so, be accepted in the church of God as such, and yet be utter strangers to true Gospel-Holiness; and the reason is, because they have missed it in the foundation; and not having in the first place obtained an interest in Christ, have built their house on the sand, whence it will fall in the time of trouble.

Wherefore, let them wisely consider these things who have any conviction of the necessity of holiness. It may be they have laboured hard in duties that materially belong to it; many things they have done, and many things forborn, on account of it; and it may be, think that for all the world they would not be found among unholy persons at the last day. This may be the condition of many young persons who have lately engaged in the ways of religion: it may be so with others, who for many years have followed after righteousness in a way of duty; but it is observable, that the duties of obedience seldom prove more easy and pleasant to such persons than they did at first, but rather more burdensome every day. Besides, they never arrive to a satisfaction in what they do; something still is wanting; and hence they often become apostates; but, what is worse still, all they have done, or can do on this bottom, will come to no account, but perish with them at the great day. Would we prevent these fatal evils,—would we have a real, thriving, everlasting holiness, let our first business be to secure a relation to Jesus Christ; without which it can never be attained.

And this may obviate the calumnies which are cast

by some on the doctrine of free justification, through the imputation of the righteousness of Christ ; for with a most shameless impudence they clamour on all those who assert it, as maintaining that salvation is attained through a mere external imputation of righteousness, while those so saved are unclean and unholy, or negligent of the duties of righteousness and obedience ; for the frontless impudence of this calumny is sufficiently evident from hence, That as we assert sanctification and holiness to be peculiar to believing justified persons, so we affirm that all such persons are infallibly sanctified and made holy.

All believers, and only believers, being sanctified, what it is that is sanctified in them, or what is the proper seat and subject of this work, is in the next place to be declared ; for it is not a mere external denomination, nor any transient act, nor any series of actions, that we plead for, but that which has a real existence, and a constant residence in us. Now this subject of sanctification is the whole person of a believer, or the entire nature of every believer ; and this must be demonstrated.

1. Our entire nature was originally created in the image of God ; our whole souls, in the rectitude of all their faculties and powers, bore this image. The body also, not as to its figure or natural use, but as an essential part of our natures, was interested in the image of God, by a participation of original righteousness.

2. By the entrance of sin, this image of God was utterly defaced and lost. The Scripture describes the depravity of our natures distinctly in all the powers of it, in our minds, wills, and affections. The original first actings of these faculties, in our thoughts and imaginations, are evil. Hence, all the outward actions of persons in this state are evil,—“unfruitful works of darkness.” The body also has a partnership in all this obliquity ; the “members of the body are servants to Uncleaness and Iniquity.”

This being the state of our whole nature, sanctification, in which its reparation consists, must equally respect the whole.

1. Hence it is called The New Man: "Put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and holiness." Eph. iv. 24. As the principle of sin is called *the old man*, because it possesses all the active powers of the old man, so this principle of holiness is called The New Man, because it possesses the whole person, with respect to its proper operations and ends.

2. The heart in Scripture, is taken for the whole soul, and all its faculties. Now this is not only affected with the work of sanctification, but consists in this, That thereby a new heart is given to us, according to the promise of the covenant.

3. There is special mention made of the effecting of this work on our souls and bodies, with their powers and faculties distinctly. This I have already proved, in the declaration of the work of our regeneration, which is only preserved and carried on to its proper end in our sanctification.

4. We need go no further for the proof hereof than to that prayer of the apostle for the Thessalonians, which we insisted on at the beginning of this discourse; "The God of peace himself sanctify you (OLOTELEIS) throughout;" that is, in your whole natures or persons; and he distributes our whole natures into the two essential parts of soul and body; and in the former he considers, (1.) the Spirit; (2.) the Soul. By the Spirit, the mind, or intellectual faculty, is understood; and by the Soul, the affections, as is generally acknowledged. These therefore the apostle prays may be sanctified and preserved holy "throughout," or entirely; but this is not all. Our bodies are an essential part of our natures; and by their union with our souls are we constituted individual persons. The body became a subject of the depravity of our nature by participation, and is considered as one entire principle with the soul, of communicating original defilement from parents to children. Besides, it is now subject, by this corruption of its constitution, to many disorderly motions, that are provocations to sin. Hence sin is said to "reign in our mortal bodies;" and our members to be servants to unrighteousness. Moreover,

by its participation in the defilement and punishment of sin, the body is disposed and made obnoxious to corruption and destruction ; for death entered by sin, and no otherwise. On all these accounts therefore it is necessary, on the other hand, that the body should be interested in this work and privilege of sanctification and holiness :—and so it is, (1.) By participation ; for it is our persons that are sanctified ; and though our souls are the first proper subject of the principle of holiness, yet our bodies, as essential parts of our natures, are partakers thereof. (2.) By a peculiar influence of the grace of God upon them also, as far as they have any influence into moral operations ; for “our bodies are members of Christ,” and consequently have influences of grace from him as our head. (3.) In the work of sanctification, the Holy Ghost dwells in us ; and hence “our bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in us ; and hereby the members of the body become instruments and servants of righteousness to holiness ;” fit to be employed in duties of holiness, as being made clean, and sanctified to God : and hereby are they disposed and prepared for a blessed resurrection at the last day, which shall be wrought by the Spirit of Christ, who dwelt in them, and sanctified them in this life.

Our whole persons, therefore, are the subjects of this work. Now, whether all this belongs to that moral virtue which some would substitute in the room of Gospel Holiness, they may do well to consider who are the patrons of that cause ; and moreover, let men beware that they deceive not themselves with a partial work in conviction only, or change of affections also, instead of this evangelical sanctification. It is often and truly said, that men may have their minds enlightened, their affections moved, and their lives much changed, and yet come short of real holiness. The best trial of this work is by its universality, with respect to its subject. If any thing remain unsanctified in us, sin may there erect its throne, and maintain its sovereignty ; but where his work is real, however imperfect as to its degree, yet it possesses the whole person, and leaves not

the least hold to sin, wherein it does not continually combat and conflict with it.

Lastly. Hence men may see how vainly they excuse themselves in their sins, from their constitutions ; for true sanctification reaches to the body. It is true, grace does not so change the natural constitution, as to make him who was sickly, healthy and strong ; nor to make him who was melancholy, to be sanguine, or the like ; but consider these things morally ; and as the whole person is a principle of moral operations, and so it works that alteration on the whole person, as to cure morally sinful distempers, as of passion and intemperances, which men were before more than ordinarily inclined to by their tempers and constitutions. Indeed, from the efficacy of it on our whole persons, is the principal discovery of its truth and reality. Let none therefore pretend that grace does not change mens' constitutions, in order to palliate their disorderly passions before men, and to keep them from being humbled for them before God : for though it does not this naturally, yet it does it morally ; so that the constitution itself shall be no more such a *fomes* and incentive to disorderly passions as before. If grace has not cured that passion, pride, wrath, intemperance which mens' constitutions peculiarly incline to, I know not for my part what it has done, nor what a number of outward duties signify. The grace of Christ causes "the wolf to dwell with the lamb, and the leopard to lie down with the kid:" it will change the most savage natures into meekness, gentleness, and kindness ; examples of which have been multiplied in the world.

CHAPTER IV.

The Defilement of Sin ; wherein it consists ; with its Purification.

WE now proceed to a further explication of the description of sanctification before given ; and the first

thing we ascribe to the Spirit of God herein is, the purification of our natures from the pollution of sin; and this purification is ascribed,

1. To the Spirit of God, who is the principal efficient of the whole. To this purpose is that promise, "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean;" Ezek. xxxvi. 25, and in Isa. iv. 4. "When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughter of Zion, by the Spirit of judgment and the Spirit of burning." Fire and water were the means whereby all things were typically cleansed in the law; and the Holy Spirit, as the efficient cause of all spiritual cleansing, is compared to them both.

2. The application of the blood of Christ to our souls, for our sanctification by the Holy Ghost, is said to be for our cleansing; "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it." Eph. v. 26, 27. "That he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works." Titus ii. 14. "The blood of Jesus Christ purgeth our consciences from dead works to serve the living God." Heb. ix. 14.

3. Where sanctification is enjoined as our duty, it is prescribed under this notion of cleansing ourselves from sin. "Wash you; make you clean." Isa. i. 16. "O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness." Jer. iv. 14. "Having these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit." 2 Cor. vii. 1.

4. Answerable to these promises and precepts, and in confirmation of them, we have the ordinance of baptism, the outward means of our initiation into Christ and the profession of the Gospel; the great representation of the inward washing of regeneration. Now this expresses the outward putting away the filth of the flesh by external washing with material water; and that which answers to it, is the inward purifying of our souls and consciences by the grace of the Spirit; that is, the "putting off the body of the sins of the flesh." Wherefore, in the explication of this first branch of our sanctification, we shall shew, (1.) That there is a spi-

ritual defilement in sin; (2.) Wherein it consists; and (3.) How it is removed.

The first need not be insisted on. In the whole representation of it made to us in the Scripture, nothing is so much inculcated as its being filthy, abominable, full of defilement and pollution; it is the abominable thing which God hates and detests, and is compared to blood, wounds, sores, leprosy, scum, and loathsome diseases: and there is no notion of sin of which believers have a more sensible experience. They find *that* in sin which fills them with shame, self-abhorrence, and deep abasement of soul.—They discern in it, or in themselves on account of it, an unsuitableness to the holiness of God, and an unfitness for communion with him. Nothing do they more earnestly seek in prayer than a cleansing from it by the blood of Christ; nor are any promises more precious to them than those of purification from it.

Secondly. The nature of this defilement must be considered. By some it is reckoned to guilt: hence sin was said to be purged by sacrifices, when its guilt was expiated; but the Scripture intends also such an internal defilement as is removed only by actual sanctification. There are also some sins which have a peculiar pollution in them, and which are called uncleanness in a peculiar manner. “Flee fornication,” saith the apostle: “every sin that a man doth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication, sinneth against his own body;” but it is the uncleanness of all sin, and not the sin of uncleanness, which we intend.

The pollution of sin is that property of it whereby it is directly opposed to the holiness of God; hence he is said to be of “purer eyes than to behold iniquity;” and hence that pathetic dehortation,—“O do not this abominable thing which my soul hateth!” That consideration of sin which ingenerates shame, is taken chiefly from the holiness of God; hence persons are said to blush, to be ashamed, to be filled with confusion of face, under a sense of this filth of sin.

The holiness of God is the infinite perfection and rectitude of his nature; and this holiness he exerts in

all he does, particularly in his Law, which is therefore holy, because it represents his own holiness; and hence whatever is contrary to it, is contrary to his holiness. It follows then, that this defilement of sin is that pravity, disorder, and shameful crookedness that is in it, with respect to the holiness of God, as expressed in the law.

Sin is either original or actual. Original sin is the habitual inconformity of our natures to the holiness of God; in actual sin is our inconformity to God and his holiness expressed in the particular commands of the law. The nature of all sin then consists in its inconformity to the rule. Now this rule may be considered, (1.) As it expresses the authority of God in its precepts and sanction. Hence guilt follows every sin; and this produces fear: so Adam on his first sin: "I heard thy voice, and was afraid." (2.) The law expresses the holiness of God. Hence there is in sin a peculiar inconformity to the holiness of God; which is the spot, the stain, the filth of it;—and this is inseparably attended with shame; so Adam expressed his sense of the filth of his sin; he was filled with shame. This is the order of these things. God, who is the object of our obedience for sin, is the supreme law-giver. On his law he has impressed his authority and his holiness. Sin, with respect to his authority, is attended with guilt; and this in the conscience of the sinner produces fear. As it respects the holiness of God, it is attended with filth or uncleanness; and this produces shame. This then is the pollution of sin, which is purged in our sanctification.

And herein there is a real filthiness, but spiritual; which is compared with and opposed to things materially and carnally so. "Not that which goeth into a man" (meats of any sort) "defile him," saith our Saviour; "but that which cometh out of the heart;" that is, spiritually, with respect to God, his law and holiness; and as men are taught the guilt of sin by their own fear, so are they taught the filth of sin by their own shame. To instruct us herein, is one end both of the Law and the Gospel.—In the doctrine of the law,

with the sanction and curse of it, and the institution of sacrifices to make atonement for sin, God declared the nature of guilt, and its remedy. By the same law, and by the institution of various ordinances for purification; as also by determining various ceremonial defilements, he made known the nature of filth and its remedy. To what end were so many meats and drinks, so many natural diseases, so many external fortuitous accidents; as touching the dead and the like, made religiously unclean by the law? It was to teach us the spiritual defilement of sin; and to the same end, together with a demonstration of the remedy thereof, were the ordinances of purification instituted; which, as they were outward, purged outward uncleanness: but internal and spiritual things were taught and prefigured thereby. Yea, so inseparable is this filth from sin, and shame from filth, that wherever there is a sense of sin, there is a sense of this filth with shame. The very Heathens were not free from a sense of this pollution; and thence proceeded all their lustrations and purgations by washings, sacrifices, and mysterious ceremonies. It remains now that we inquire into the reasons why sin is such a defilement of our natures, and so inseparably attended with shame; and to this purpose we may observe,

(1.) That the spiritual beauty of the soul consists in its conformity to God. Grace gives beauty. Hence Christ is said to be "fairer than the children of men," and that, because "grace was poured into his lips;" and when the church is adorned with his grace, he affirms her to be "fair and comely." This beauty originally consisted in the image of God in us, which contained the whole order, harmony, and symmetry of our natures in all their faculties and actions. Sin, therefore, has a deformity in it, or brings spots, stains, and wrinkles on the soul; and this is the filth and pollution of it.

(2.) Holiness is the honour of our souls. It makes them truly noble; for all honour consists in an accession to him who is the only spring and absolute possessor of all that is so. Now this we have alone

by holiness, or that image of God in which we were created ; and, therefore, sin, which is contrary to it, is base, vile, and unworthy. It is the only base thing in nature. Hence it is said of some great sinners, that they had “debased themselves to Hell : and unless men are absolutely hardened, they are in their own consciences sensible of this baseness of sin. When men’s eyes are opened to see their nakedness, they see that in sin which is so vile, base, and filthy, that, like persons who have some loathsome disease, they cannot bear the sight of their own sores. Yea, no tongue can express the sense which a believing soul has of the uncleanness of sin, with respect to the holiness of God.

Now this shameful defilement of sin is either habitual or actual. (1.) That which is habitual in all the faculties of our souls by nature ; they are all shamefully depraved ; hence by nature we are wholly unclean. (2.) That which is actual in all the actings of our polluted faculties ; for be any sin of what nature it may, there is pollution in it. Hence the apostle advises to cleanse ourselves from all “pollutions of flesh and spirit ;” the sins that are internal and spiritual, as pride, self-love, covetousness, unbelief, have a pollution attending them, as well as those which are fleshly and sensual ; and so far as this disorder mixes itself with the best of our duties, it renders both us and them unclean. “We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.”

This uncleanness, as it is habitual, is equal in all men as they are born into the world ; but with respect to actual sins, it has various degrees and aggravations. The greater a sin is, from its nature or circumstances, the greater is the defilement of it ; hence no sin is expressed under such terms of filthiness as idolatry, which is the greatest of sins. Or, there is an aggravation of it when the whole person is defiled, as it is in the case of fornication ; and it is heightened by a continuance in sin, whereby an addition is made to its pollution every day, and which is called “wallowing in the mire.”

In this whole discourse I have but briefly touched

upon this consideration of sin, which the Scripture so frequently inculcates; for as all the first institutions of divine worship had some respect hereto, so the last rejection of obstinate sinners mentioned in it is, "Let him that is filthy be filthy still;" and in order to improve this view of sin for the discovery of the nature of holiness, we may yet observe these three things:—

(1.) Where this uncleanness remains unpurged, there neither is nor can be any true holiness; for it is universally opposed to it; it is our unholiness. I acknowledge that it is not perfectly taken away from any person in this world, and those who are truly sanctified are deeply sensible of the remains of it; but there is an initial, real, sincere purging of it, which belongs to the essence of holiness, begun and carried on, though not absolutely perfected in this life.

(2.) Unless this uncleanness be washed away, we can never come to the enjoyment of God. Nothing "that defileth shall enter into the New Jerusalem." To suppose that an unpurified sinner can be brought to the blessed enjoyment of God, is to overthrow both the Law and the Gospel, and to say that Christ died in vain. It is therefore of the same importance with the everlasting salvation of our souls, to have them purged from sin.

(3.) We are unable of ourselves, without the special assistance of the Holy Spirit, to free ourselves from this pollution. It is true, it is frequently prescribed to us as our duty. We are commanded to wash ourselves, to cleanse ourselves from sin, and the like; but these expressions do not imply a power in ourselves to perform what is so required; but they teach us, that whatever God works in us in a way of grace, he prescribes to us in a way of duty; and though he do it in us, yet he also doth it by us; so that the same work is an act of his Spirit, and of our wills as actuated thereby. We are not able by any endeavours of our own, to cleanse ourselves from this defilement. "If I wash myself with snow-water," saith Job, "and make my hands ever so clean, yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and my own clothes shall make me to be abhor-

red." Means may be used whereby an appearance of cleansing may be made ; but when things come to be tried in the sight of God, all will be found filthy and unclean. " In vain," saith the prophet, " shalt thou take to thyself soap and much nitre ; thou shalt not be purged." The most probable means of cleansing, and the most effectual in our judgment, however multiplied, shall fail in this case. Some speak much of washing away their sins by tears of repentance ; but repentance, as prescribed in the Scripture, is of another nature, and assigned to another end. The institutions of the law were of themselves insufficient for this purpose ; they purified the unclean legally, and as to the flesh ; of themselves they could go no further, only they signified that whereby sin was really cleansed. The real stain is too deep to be removed by any outward ordinances ; and therefore God, as it were, rejecting them all, promised to open another Fountain for that purpose. Zech. xiii. 1. Wherefore,

There is great emptiness and vanity in all those reliefs which the papal church have invented. Sensible they are of the stain of sin, but ignorant of the only remedy thereof ; and as in the work of justification they submit not to the righteousness of God, so in the work of sanctification, being ignorant of the work of the Spirit of grace, and efficacy of the blood of Christ, they go about to set up their own imaginations. Thus they would have the whole uncleanness of our natures to be washed away by baptism ; and having thus shifted themselves of the filth of original sin, as easily as a man may change his clothes when they are foul, they have found out many ways whereby the defilement of actual sins may be purged. There is the sprinkling of holy water, confession to a priest, penances, &c. that are supposed to be wonderfully efficacious ; and indeed, the art of confession is the greatest invention to accommodate the inclinations of the flesh that ever the world was acquainted with ; for as nothing is so suited to the carnal interests of the priests, nor so secures them veneration in the midst of their loose and worthless conversation, so for the people, who, for the most

part, have other business to do than long to trouble themselves about their sins, it is such an expeditious method of exoneration to deposit them wholly and safely with a priest, that nothing equal to it could have been invented;—but, after all, they cannot be perfectly satisfied in their consciences; their sores will sometimes break through all these sorry coverings; and their sins yet fill them with shame and fear; wherefore they betake themselves to their sheet-anchor in this storm, in the relief which they have provided in another world: this is in their purgatory, to which they must trust at last for cancelling all their odd scores, and purging away that filth of sin which they have been unwilling to part with in this world: but as this whole business of purgatory is a groundless fable; an invention set up in competition with the sanctification of the Spirit and the blood of Christ, so it is as great an encouragement to unholiness and a continuance in sin, as ever was found out, or can be made use of. Wherefore, setting aside such vain imaginations, we shall enquire into the true causes of our purification.

CHAPTER V.

The Pollution of Sin purged by the Spirit and Blood of Christ.

THE purification of believers from the defilement of sin, is assigned in Scripture to various causes:—To the Holy Spirit, as the efficient cause;—to the blood of Christ, as the procuring cause;—and, to faith and affliction, as the instrumental causes.

1. That we are purified by the Spirit of God, has been already proved, and is evident from the nature of his work in our regeneration; for as the spring of all the pollution of sin lies in the depravity of the faculties of our nature, he renews them again by his grace. As far then as our minds, our hearts, our affections are renewed by the Holy Ghost, so far are we cleansed from our habitual pollution. The more we have of

saving light in our minds, of heavenly love in our affections, of a readiness to obedience in our hearts,—the more pure are we, the more cleansed from the pollution of sin. The old principle of corrupted nature is unclean and defiling; the new creature, the principle of grace, implanted in the soul by the Holy Ghost, is pure and purifying, clean and holy.

The Holy Ghost also purifies us, by strengthening our souls by his grace to all holy duties, and against all actual sins. He preserves the soul free from defilements, or pure and holy, according to the tenor of the new covenant; but it may be asked, How is the soul freed from those defilements it had contracted before this work upon it, or those which it has contracted since? for there is no man who is not more or less defiled with sin while in the body; and if we are thus defiled, how shall we be cleansed? I answer, "God is just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness;" but by what means is this accomplished? "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." 1 John i. 7, &c.

II. It is therefore the blood of Christ which is the meritorious procuring cause of our purification, by a special application of it to our souls by the Holy Ghost; and there is not any truth belonging to the mystery of the Gospel which is more plainly asserted. "He hath washed us from our sins in his own blood." Rev. i. 5. "He gave himself for his church, that he might wash and cleanse it." Eph. v. 26; and this the faith and experience of all believers confirms; for they are not imaginations of their own, but what, being built on the truth and promises of God, yield sensible spiritual relief and refreshment to their souls. This they believe, this they pray for, and find the fruits and effects of it in themselves.

By the "blood of Christ," is intended the blood of the sacrifice, with the power and efficacy of it; and the blood of a sacrifice may be considered either as it was offered to God to make atonement, or as it was sprinkled on other things for their cleansing. Part of the blood in every propitiatory sacrifice, was to be

sprinkled round about the altar ; and that of the great sacrifice of expiation seven times before the mercy-seat : and so the blood of Christ's sacrifice is to be considered, both as he offered it to God to make atonement for sin, and as it is sprinkled by the Spirit on the consciences of believers, to purge them from dead works ; and hence it is called, with respect to our sanctification, the "Blood of Sprinkling;" for we have "the sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, through the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus."

The blood of Christ, in his sacrifice, is still of the same efficacy as it was in that hour wherein it was shed. The blood of other sacrifices was always to be used immediately upon its effusion ; for if it were cold and congealed, it was of no use, to be offered or sprinkled. Lev. xvii. 11. Blood was appointed to make atonement, as the life or animal spirits were in it ; but the blood of the sacrifice of Christ is always warm, having the same spirit of life and sanctification still moving in it. Hence our way of approach to God thereby, is said to be always "living" (Heb. x. 20.) ; and yet always as "newly slain." Every one, therefore, who at any time has an actual interest in the blood of Christ, as sacrificed, has as real a purification from the defilement of sin, as he had typically who stood by the priest, and had blood or water sprinkled upon him ; for the Holy Ghost diligently declares, that whatever was done legally or typically, by any of the sacrifices of old, for the expiation or purification of sin, was all done really and spiritually by that one sacrifice and sprinkling of the blood of Christ. Thereby is the gradual carrying on of our sanctification habitually effected, which was signified by the continual daily sacrifice. From thence is special cleansing virtue communicated to us by the ordinances of the Gospel, as is expressly affirmed (Eph. v. 25.) denoted by the doubling of the daily sacrifices on the Sabbath. By it are we purged from all our sins whatever, great or small, as was typified in the great sacrifice on the day of expiation ; and to him we have continual recourse, on all occasions of our spiritual defilements whatever.

Thus his blood, as to its purifying virtue, answers to, and accomplishes all the legal institutions, especially that of the ashes of the "red heifer" (Num. xix.) whereby every one who was defiled might immediately be cleansed: and he who would not make application thereto, was to be cut off from the people (ver. 20.); and it is no otherwise with respect to the blood of Christ, in our spiritual defilements; thence it is called "a fountain opened for sin and uncleanness (Zech. xiii. 1.); and he who neglects application thereto, shall perish in his uncleanness, and that eternally.

We may further enquire, How does the blood of Christ thus cleanse us from our sins? and, How do we come to be interested therein? As to the first, it must be observed, that this uncleanness is not corporeal, but spiritual. It is the inconformity of sin to the holiness of God, whence it is loathsome to him, and attended with shame in us. Now, wherever there is an interest obtained in the purifying virtue of the blood of Christ, it takes away all loathsomeness in the sight of God (not from sin, but from the sinner); so that he shall be as one absolutely washed and purified before him. It also takes away shame out of the conscience, and gives the soul boldness in the presence of God. Isa. i. 16, 18; Psalm li. 7; Heb. x. 19.

As to the way in which we become interested in the blood of Christ, we observe,

1. It is the Holy Spirit who discovers to us the pollution of sin, and our defilement by it. Something indeed of this kind will be wrought by the power of natural conscience, awakened and excited by outward means of conviction; but this alone will never guide us to the blood of Christ for cleansing. Such a sight and conviction of it as may fill us with self-abhorrence and abasement, is the work of the Holy Spirit. In a sense hereof the publican stood at a distance, as one ashamed, and destitute of any confidence for a nearer approach. So the holy men of old professed to God that they "blushed, and were ashamed to lift up their faces to him."

2. The Holy Spirit proposes and presents to us the

only true remedy, the only means of purification. What false ways have been invented to this purpose, has been already declared ; and every man is ready to find out a way of his own. Though the only fountain for cleansing be near us, yet we cannot see it till the Holy Ghost open our eyes, as he did the eyes of Hagar : he it is who shews it to us, and leads us to it. It is an eminent part of his office and work to "glorify the Son ;" and this he does by shewing such things unto us. To have a true spiritual sense of the defilement of sin, and a gracious view of the cleansing virtue of the blood of Christ, is an eminent effect of the Spirit of grace.

3. It is he who worketh faith in us, whereby we receive Christ himself, and are actually interested in this, and in all the benefits of his mediation. He is our propitiation through faith in his blood as offered ; and he is our sanctification through faith in his blood as sprinkled ; and particular acting of faith on the blood of Christ, for the cleansing of the soul from sin, is required of us. A renewed conscience is sensible of pollution in every sin, and is not freed from the shame of it without a particular application to the blood of Christ. It comes by faith to this fountain, as the sick man to the pool of healing waters, and waits for a season to be cleansed in it : so David, on the defilement he had contracted by his great sins, cries to God, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean ; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." *Psa. li. 7.* He alludes to the purging of the leprous person, the ordinance whereof is instituted in *Levit. xiv.* ; or to that more general institution for the purification of all legal uncleanness, by the water of separation made of the ashes of the red heifer (*Numb. xix.*) ; for both these purifications were made by the sprinkling of blood or water with hyssop. It is plain, I say, that he alludes to these institutions ; but it is as plain they are not the things which he intends ; for there was not in the law any purging with hyssop for persons guilty of such sins as he lay under ; and therefore he professes, in the close of the Psalm, that "sacrifice and offering, God

would not accept" in his case: it was therefore that which was signified by those institutions which he applied to, namely, to the blood of Christ, by which he might be "justified from all things from which he could not be justified by the law of Moses." In like manner do all believers make an actual application to the blood of Christ for cleansing them from their sins; before which they have a conscience of sin, that is, condemning them for sin, and filling them with shame and fear.

This application consists in four things:—(1.) A spiritual view of the blood of Christ in his sacrifice, as proposed in the promises of the Gospel for our purification. "Look unto me," saith he, "and be ye saved;" which respects the whole work of our salvation, and all the means thereof. Our way of coming to our interest therein, is by looking to him; for "as the serpent was lifted up in the wilderness, so was he in his sacrifice on the cross lifted up;" and so in the Gospel is he represented to us. Now the means whereby they were healed in the wilderness, was by looking to the serpent that was lifted up: herein faith first acts itself, by a spiritual view of the blood of Christ, as proposed in the Gospel for the only means of our purification; and the more we abide in this contemplation, the more effectual will our success be in our application thereto. (2.) Faith actually relies on his blood for effecting that great end for which it is proposed; for as God sets him forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood as offered,—so to be our sanctification through faith in his blood as sprinkled. (3.) Faith works herein by fervent prayer, with respect to his promises; "because for all these things God will be sought unto by the house of Israel." By this means the soul brings itself nigh to its own mercy; and this we are directed to in Heb. iv. 15, 16. (4.) An acquiescence in the truth and faithfulness of God, for cleansing by the blood of Christ; whence we are freed from perplexing shame, and have boldness in the presence of God.

4. The Holy Ghost actually communicates the cleansing purifying virtue of the blood of Christ to

our consciences, whereby we are freed from shame, and have boldness towards God ; for the whole work of applying the benefits of Christ's mediation to believers, is properly his ; and these are the things that believers aim at, in all their fervent prayers for the purifying their souls by the sprinkling and washing of the blood of Christ ; the persuasion of which gives them peace and holy boldness in the presence of God ; without which they have nothing but shame and confusion of face in a sense of their own pollutions.

. III. FAITH is the instrumental cause of our purification ;—" Purifying their hearts by faith." Acts xv. 9. The two unfailing evidences of sincere faith are, That within, it purifies the heart ; and without, it works by love. These are the touch-stone whereon faith ought to be tried. We "purify our souls in obeying the truth, through the Spirit,"—that is, by believing, which is our original obedience to the truth ; and hereby our souls are purified. Unbelievers and unclean are the same ; for they have nothing in them whereby they might be instrumentally cleansed ; and we are purified by faith, because (1.) Faith itself is the principal grace whereby our nature is restored to the image of God, and so freed from our original defilement. (2.) It is by faith that we receive the purifying virtue and influences of the blood of Christ, as before mentioned. Faith is the grace whereby we constantly adhere to Christ ; and if the woman who touched his garment in faith, obtained virtue from him to heal her issue of blood, shall not those who cleave to him continually, derive virtue from him for the healing of their spiritual defilements ? (3.) It is by the working of faith principally, that those lusts which are defiling, are gradually mortified and subdued. Faith derives supplies of the Spirit from Jesus Christ ; on which alone these supplies depend. (4.) Faith takes in all the motives which are proposed to us to stir up our utmost endeavours for preventing the defilements of sin ; such as the participation of the excellent promises of God at present, and the future enjoyment of God in glory.

IV. Purification from sin is likewise ascribed to

AFFLICTIONS. Hence they are called God's Furnace, whereby he takes away our dross. They are also called Fire, that tries the ways and works of men, consuming "their hay and stubble," and purifying their gold and silver; and this they do by an efficacy communicated by the Spirit of God; for by the cross of Christ they were cut off from the curse of the first covenant, to which all their evils belonged, and implanted into the covenant of grace. The tree of the cross being cast into the waters of affliction, has rendered them wholesome and medicinal. Christ being the head of the covenant, all the afflictions of his members are originally his; and they all tend to increase our conformity to him in holiness; and they work together for this blessed end in several ways. (1.) They bear some tokens of God's displeasure against sin, by which believers are led to a fresh view of its vileness; for though afflictions are an effect of love, yet it is of love mixed with care to prevent distemper: whatever else they are, they are always chastisements,—and correction respects faults; and it is our safest course in every affliction, to lodge the adequate cause of it in our deserts. Now a view of sin, under suffering, makes men to abhor themselves, and be ashamed of it. (2.) Afflictions take off the allurements of all created good things, by which the affections are solicited to cleave to them inordinately. God designs by affliction to wither all the flowers of this world, by discovering their insufficiency to give relief. This intercepts the disorderly intercourse which is apt to be between them and our affections, whereby our minds are polluted; for there is a pollution attending the least inordinate actings of our minds towards objects in themselves sinful, or rendered so by our excess towards them, while we are under the command of loving God with all our hearts. (3.) Afflictions take off the edge of those affections whereby the corrupt lusts of the mind and flesh operate. They curb those vigorous affections which were always ready for the service of lust, and which sometimes carry the soul into the pursuit of sin, like the horse into the battle, with madness and fury. (4.) By

these, God excites all the graces of the Spirit into a constant and vigorous exercise; and therein the work of cleansing the soul from the pollution of sin is carried on. A time of affliction is the special season for the peculiar exercise of all grace; for the soul can no otherwise support or relieve itself. It is taken off from other comforts, every sweet thing being made bitter to it; it must therefore live by faith, love, and delight in God.

And thus we have taken a view of the first part of our sanctification, which I have the more largely insisted upon, because it is utterly neglected by those who would have holiness consist merely in the practice of moral virtue. What I have said may perhaps be deemed enthusiastic, though there is no reason why it should, but, only because it is taken from Scripture; but where men hate the practice of holiness, it is in vain to teach them the nature of it.

But we must not pass over these things without some reflections upon ourselves, and some consideration of our concern in them.

First, We may from hence take a view of our own condition by nature. It is useful for us all to look back into it; and it is necessary for those who are in it, to be fully acquainted with it. There is a spiritual leprosy spread over all our nature, which renders us loathsome to God, and puts us in a state of separation from him, as those of old, who were legally unclean, were separated from the congregation, and from all the pledges of God's gracious presence. Whatever men do of themselves to be quit of this defilement, only hides, but cannot remove it: Adam cured neither his nakedness nor the shame of it by his fig-leaves. Some have no other covering of their spiritual filth but outward ornaments of the flesh, which increase it, and rather proclaim than hide it. The greatest filth in the world is covered with the greatest gaiety. Whatever we do of ourselves is a covering, not a cleansing; and if we die in this condition, uncleansed, it is impossible that ever we should be admitted into the blessed presence of the holy God. Let no man deceive you then

with vain words : it is not doing a few good works, it is not an outward profession of religion, that will give you "access with boldness" to God. Shame will cover you when it will be too late : unless you are washed by the Spirit of God, and in the blood of Christ, you shall not inherit the kingdom of God : you will be a horrid spectacle to saints and angels, to yourselves, and to one another, when the shame of your nakedness shall be made to appear ! If, therefore, you would not perish as base defiled creatures, when your pride, and your wealth, and your beauty, and your ornaments, and your duties, will stand you in no stead, —look out betimes for that only way of purification which God has ordained : but if you love your defilements, if you are proud of your pollutions, if you satisfy yourselves with your outward ornaments,—there is no remedy, you must perish for ever !

Seeing this is the condition of all by nature, if any shall enquire what they must do to be cleansed, I shall endeavour to direct them to the "Fountain set open for sin and uncleanness."

1. Labour after an acquaintance with it in its nature and effects. Though the Scripture abounds in the declaration of it, yet men in general take little notice of it. Perhaps, they are somewhat affected with the guilt of sin, but not at all with its filth ; so that they can escape the righteousness of God which they have provoked, they do not regard their unlikeness to his holiness, whereby they are polluted. Those who would be cleansed from this pollution, must first know it ; and though we cannot do this aright without the Spirit of God, yet several duties are required of us ; as (1.) To search the Scriptures. This is the glass wherein every man ought to contemplate himself ; and he who will not from hence learn his natural deformity, shall live polluted, and die accursed. (2.) He who has received the testimony of Scripture concerning his corrupted state, if he will take pains to examine himself thereby, will have a further view of it. Multitudes learn from what they read and hear, that they are polluted by nature (and they cannot deny it) but yet really find no

such thing in themselves; but when men will bring their souls to the glass of the perfect law, and consider how it is with themselves; how vain their imaginations, how disorderly their affections, how perverse all the actings of their minds,—they will be ready to cry with the leprous man, “Unclean! Unclean!” (3.) Prayer for light and direction herein, is the duty of all; for a man to know himself, was of old esteemed the highest attainment of human wisdom. Some men will not inquire into themselves; some men dare not; and others neglect it, from mere sloth; but he who would ever be purged from his sins, must thus far make bold with himself, and dare to be thus far wise; and in the use of the means before prescribed, considering his own darkness and the treachery of his heart, he is to pray fervently that God, by the supernatural light of his Spirit, would assist him in his search after the defilement of his nature. Without this, he will never make any great or useful discoveries.

2. Those who would indeed be purged from the pollution of sin, must endeavour to be affected with it, suitably to the discovery which they have made of it. No man who has read the Scriptures can be ignorant how frequently God calls on men to be ashamed, on account of their sins.

3. Let such persons be fully assured, that they can never purify themselves. According to men’s convictions of the defilements of sin, will be their endeavours after purification: but here many fall into great mistakes: their own sorrow and amendment of life must do this work for them; but though these things are good in themselves, they are frequently abused, and turned into effectual means of keeping men from Christ; for legal repentance being trusted to, will infallibly keep the soul from that evangelical repentance which alone God accepts: and mere reformation of life rested in, proves opposite to endeavours for the renovation of our nature; but let these duties be performed in what manner you please, they are utterly insufficient to cleanse us. Nor will any seek for that

which is effectual to this purpose, till they are fully convinced hereof.

4. It is therefore their duty to acquaint themselves with that only remedy which God has appointed. One great end of divine revelation, was to direct men to the way of cleansing: and one principal means which Satan has always used to keep men in their apostacy from God, was by supplying them with innumerable ways of purification, suited to the imaginations of their dark and superstitious minds; and it should excite great diligence in this inquiry, that God has laid great weight on this matter; as is evident from the institutions, promises, and precepts, both of the Law and Gospel: besides, the difficulty of attaining the knowledge of it is to be considered. It is a part of the mystery of the Gospel, which carnal reason esteemeth foolishness. It is not easily admitted that we can no otherwise be cleansed from our sins but by the sprinkling of that blood which was shed so long ago. This doctrine persons are therefore obliged to inquire after; that being satisfied with its truth, their minds may be taken off from those vain remedies which their own hearts and others blind devotions would suggest.

5. But now the great inquiry is, How a defiled soul may come to have an interest in the purifying virtue of the blood of Christ? I answer, The purifying virtue of the blood of Christ, with the administration of the Spirit for the effectual application of it to our souls, is exhibited in the promises of the covenant; and the only way to become a partaker of the good things presented in the promises, is by faith. So Abraham received the promises; and so must we. Now this is not from their being proposed to us, but from our believing of that which is proposed: the whole benefit of the promises depends absolutely on our "mixing them with faith,"—resting on his divine power and veracity,—believing that the things promised to us shall be accomplished. God has given this power and efficacy to it by the covenant. In the promise of the Gospel it is proposed and tendered to us. Faith in that promise is that which alone gives

us an interest in it, makes us partakers of it, and renders it actually effectual.

6. Faith in this case will exert itself by fervent prayer. When David, by his dreadful fall, felt his need of a new universal purification, how earnest is he in his supplications that God would again "purge and cleanse him!" And when any soul is really coming over to the way of God for his washing in the blood of Christ, he will not be more earnest in any supplication than in this; and hereby doth Christ communicate of the purging efficacy of his blood unto us.

Secondly. Hence also instruction may be taken for those who are freed from the general pollution of nature, by "the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;" of whom the apostle says, "Such were some of you; but ye are washed." Several duties are incumbent on such persons; as,

(1.) Continual self-abasement in the remembrance of that woful condition from whence they have been delivered. This consideration greatly influences the minds of believers to humility, and hides pride from them; for what should creatures of such a base and defiled extraction have to boast of? God calls his people to self-abasement, not only from what they are, but from what they were. So he ordained that confession to be made by him who offered the first-fruits of old:—"A Syrian ready to perish was my father;" or (a Syrian, that is) "Laban was ready to destroy my father, a poor helpless man, that went from one country to another for bread." How is it of sovereign mercy that I am now in this state of plenty and peace? And when David on his great sin and repentance took in all humbling considerations, here he fixes the head of them:—"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." So our apostle frequently calls the saints to remembrance of their former condition; and therewith the minds of all true believers are greatly affected. When they consider what was their former state, universally polluted, with what remainders of it still abide, it casts them on the earth, and causes them to lay their mouths in the dust:—

hence proceed their deep humiliations, confessions, and supplications.

(2.) That initial deliverance which believers have from their original pollution, is a cause of everlasting thankfulness. When Christ cleansed the ten lepers, he manifests how much it was their duty to return to him with their thankful acknowledgment, though nine of them failed therein. The consideration hereof influences the minds of believers in all their grateful ascriptions of glory and praise to Jesus Christ. "To him," say they, "who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever!"

Again: We have declared not only that there is an universal defilement in our natural frame, but that there is a pollution attending every actual sin; and hence believers may learn (1.) To watch against sin, and all the motions of it, however secret: they all defile the conscience; and it is an evidence of a gracious soul to be watchful against sin on this account. (2.) To walk humbly before the Lord all our days. Notwithstanding our utmost watchfulness against sin, there is yet "no man that liveth and sinneth not." Those who pretend to perfection here, as they manifest their ignorance of God and themselves, so are they often left visibly to confute their own pride and folly: but to what purpose is it to hide ourselves from ourselves, when we have to do with God? God knows, and our souls know, that more or less we are defiled in all we do. Who can express the motions of lust that are in the flesh, the irregular actings of our affections, the folly of the imaginations of our minds, with the vanity of our words! all which are defiling! I confess I know not that my soul abhors any eruption of mens' diabolical pride, like that whereby they reproach the deep humiliations of poor sinners in their confessions and supplications. Alas! that our nature should be capable of such a contempt of the holiness of God, and so senseless of its own vileness, as not to tremble at the despising of the lowest abasements of poor sinners before the holy God! (3.) We ought continually to en-

deavour after the wasting of sin in the root and principle of it. The principle of sin, however impaired, still abides in all believers; and it is the root of all sin in us which tempts, entices, conceives, and brings forth; and this has more or less strength, as it is more or less mortified by grace; and according to its strength, so it abounds in bringing forth the defiling acts of sin. If, therefore, we would preserve ourselves from multiplying our defilements, it is this that we must set ourselves against. The tree must be made good, if we expect good fruit; and the evil root must be dug up, or evil fruit will be produced. (4.) Hence also is manifest the necessity we have of continual applications of Jesus Christ for cleansing virtue from his Spirit, and the sprinkling of his blood on our consciences to purge them from dead works. We defile ourselves every day, and if we go not every day to the fountain, we shall quickly be all over leprous: our consciences will be filled with dead works, so that we shall be unable to serve the living God. When a soul is filled with self-abasement under a sense of its own defilements, applies to Christ continually for cleansing, with a fervency answerable to its convictions, it is then in its proper course. I am persuaded no true believer in the world is a stranger to this duty: and the more any one abounds therein, the more genuine is his faith evidenced to be, and the more humble is his walk before the Lord.

CHAPTER VI.

The Positive Work of the Spirit in the Sanctification of Believers.

WE now proceed to the positive work of the Spirit in the sanctification of believers; for he not only cleanses their natures and persons from the pollution of sin, but he communicates the great, permanent, positive effect of holiness to their souls, whereby he guides and assists them in all the acts and duties

thereof. I shall comprise what belongs to this part of his work in the two following assertions :

I. There is in the souls of believers a supernatural principle or habit of grace, wrought and preserved by the Spirit of God, whereby they are enabled to live unto God, and perform that obedience which he requires and accepts; and this is essentially distinct from all natural habits, intellectual or moral, however acquired or improved.

II. There is an immediate work of the Holy Spirit required unto every act of holy obedience, whether internal or external.

In the first of these assertions, four things are to be confirmed:—1. That there is such a habit or principle in believers; 2. That it inclines the soul to acts of holiness; 3. That it gives the soul power to live to God in holy obedience; 4. That it differs essentially from all other habits whatever.

1. It is a gracious supernatural habit, or a principle of spiritual life. I call it a *habit*, not as though it were absolutely of the same kind as acquired habits; but because it resembles them in its effects: but it has much more conformity to a natural instinct than to an acquired habit. It is a virtue, a power, a principle of spiritual life and grace, created, infused into our souls, antecedent to, and the next cause of all acts of true holiness. It does not consist in any single acts of obedience, though good in their own nature; for many such acts may be performed by unholy persons. Cain's sacrifice and Ahab's repentance were signal acts of obedience materially; yet no acts of holiness formally, nor did either make or denominate them holy. Men may "give all their goods to feed the poor, and yet be nothing." Single acts may evidence holiness, as Abraham's offering his son; but they constitute none holy, nor will a course of actions make any one holy. Nor does it consist in an habitual disposition of mind to outward duties of piety or obedience: but this holiness is such an habit or principle, as is antecedent to all acts of the same kind; for every act of true holiness must have something supernatural

in it, from an internal principle of grace. This always abides in those who are truly sanctified ; whence they are always holy, and not only so when they are actually exercised in the duties of holiness. Hereby are they prepared, disposed, and enabled to all duties of obedience, and by the influence hereof into their acts and duties they become holy, and no otherwise.

That there is such an habit in believers, is evident from the Scriptures. God promised, of old, to circumcise the hearts of his people ;—to give them a new heart and a new spirit,—and to write his law in their hearts. It is more expressly revealed in the New Testament. John iii. 6. We are born again of the Spirit, and that which is born in this new birth is Spirit: something existing in us that is of a spiritual nature and spiritual efficacy. It is something abiding in us, acting in a continual opposition against the flesh or sin. It is also called A New Creature (something that has the nature of a living creature) and a Divine Nature: now a nature is the principle of all operations ; and this is that habit of grace or principle of holiness that we plead for.

Hereby we have union with Jesus Christ, the Head of the church, and become “members of his bones and of his flesh,” as Eve was of Adam ; she had the same nature with him, and that derived from him ; so we are of him, partakers of the same divine nature ; for he that is “joined to the Lord is one Spirit.” How excellent then is this grace ! It is the same in kind with the holy nature of Christ, and makes us one with him. How great a privilege is it ! What an honour and security to the soul, that has it ! What duties are hence required ! and how should we admire the grace and love of Christ through whose mediation we receive it ! This is our life ; but we cannot perfectly comprehend it, for it is “hid with Christ in God.”

(1.) Hence we may learn, not to satisfy ourselves with any duties, however good in themselves, unless there be a vital principle of holiness in our hearts. A few honest actions and a few useful duties, satisfy many that they are as holy as they need to be ; but God

rejects all such duties, however multiplied, if the heart be not before sanctified. Legal convictions, terrors of conscience, dictates of reason, may compel men to their observance ; but all is lost ; men do but labour in the fire about them, if the soul be not prepared with this principle of holiness.

Observe, however, that as far as these duties of morality or piety are good in themselves, they ought to be approved and encouraged in all men. They may be defective in their principle, and misapplied as to their end ; but yet we ought not to undervalue the duties themselves, nor discourage the performance of them. The world is not in a condition to spare the good actions of bad men ; and it is much to be wished that we could see more of the fruits of moral virtues, and duties of religious piety, among unsanctified persons than we do : but this we may, and ought to do ; we may tell them (as our Lord told the young man) " One thing is yet wanting unto you ;" you want faith, or you want Christ, or you want a spiritual principle of evangelical holiness ; without which all your labour will be lost, and come to no account at the last day. The due assertion of grace never was, nor can be, an obstruction to any duty of obedience.

Observe again, That wherever there is this principle of holiness in the heart, there will be the effects of it in the life ; for the great design of it is to enable us to comply with the grace or Gospel of God, which " teacheth us to live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present world." If the tree be good, the fruit will be good also : and it is vile hypocrisy in any to pretend to inward sanctification, while their lives are barren in the fruits of righteousness.

(2.) Hence it appears why men propose such various courses with respect to holiness. All who profess Christianity agree that holiness is absolutely necessary ; but when they should come to the practice of it, some take one false way, and some another. Hence some would have moral virtue to be their holiness, while others place it in superstitious devotions. Now all this arises from ignorance of the true nature of ho-

liness on the one hand, and love of sin on the other. The nature of sanctification is deep and mysterious, not to be understood without the aid of spiritual light; and what the world knoweth not in these things, it always hates. The love of sin also secretly influences the minds of many persons; they fear and abhor that universal change of soul which tends to the extirpation of all sin; and hence they take up with morality, and superstitious devotions, any thing that will pacify a natural conscience, or procure the reputation of religion.

(3.) We may learn from hence, how great and excellent a work this of sanctification is, and that it is a greater matter to be truly holy than most persons are aware of. It is so great a work, that it must be wrought by "the God of peace himself;" by the blood of Christ; and by the influence of the Spirit: and it does not become Divine and Infinite Wisdom to engage the power of such glorious causes and means for the production of any common effect.

2. This principle of holiness *inclines* the subject of it to acts of its own kind: as it has the nature, so it has the properties of an habit, of which this is the principal. It is directed to a certain end, and constantly inclines to actions which tend thereto.

It has a certain end; and this is that we may live to God. By nature we are "alienated from this life of God;" but the first inseparable property of the renewed nature is, that it disposes the soul to the acts and duties of this life, so that it shall attend to them, not from mere conviction or external impression, but from an internal genuine principle; and as the inclination of the carnal mind lies directly against spiritual things, so this new principle tends always to actions spiritually good, according to the mind of God.

This disposition of heart is, in the Scripture, called by the names of Fear, Love, Delight, and of such other affections as express a constant inclination to their objects. This is the intention of that promise of the covenant, "I will give them one heart, that they may fear me." The "new heart" is the new nature; the

first effect of which is, the "fear of God always," or a new spiritual inclination of soul to the will and commands of God. In like manner, it is expressed by love, which is the inclination of the soul to obedience to God, and communion with him, with delight and complacency.—It is, moreover, expressed by being "spiritually minded, which is life and peace;" that is, the bent and inclination of the mind to spiritual things, is that whereby we live to God, and enjoy peace with him. By nature we savour only the things of the flesh, and "mind earthly things;" but hereby we mind the things that are above, or "set our affections on them." By virtue hereof David professeth that his soul "followed hard after God;" or inclined earnestly to all those ways whereby he might live to him, and come to the enjoyment of him. By the apostle Peter it is compared to our natural inclination to food; "as newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby," which is a constant unalterable inclination. This, therefore, is what I intend. Every nature has its proper disposition and actings. The principle of holiness is such a nature; and wherever this principle is, it disposes the whole soul to acts of holiness,—and that universally, constantly, and permanently.

(1.) *Universally.* There is a disposition to all the duties of holiness without exception; there is a respect to all God's commands. Some may be more difficult, more contrary to our natural inclinations or secular interest than others; but if there be a gracious principle within, it will equally incline us to them all. Any other principle will give way to an habitual reserve of something contrary thereto. It will admit either of the omission of some duty, the commission of some sin, or the retaining of some lust. Thus our Saviour tried the rich young man who boasted of his duties with one that crossed his secular interests, and he gave up all. So Naaman, who vowed obedience to the God of Israel, would have a reserve to bow in the house of Rimmon, for the sake of his worldly interest. Believers themselves may be surprised into actual omis-

sion of duties, and a temporary indulgence of corrupt affections; but an habitual reserve for any thing sinful, is inconsistent with this principle of holiness.

(2.) This principle disposes the believer to duties of holiness constantly; he is in the fear of the Lord "all the day long." It is true, there are seasons in which we meet with great difficulties and obstructions from our lust and temptations; and the actings of grace may be less vigorous at some times than at others; but still this holy disposition is, in its own nature, like a stream that flows from a living fountain, pressing forwards, notwithstanding the opposition that may divert it for a season. Natural men sometimes perform duties of obedience, from strong impressions excited by afflictions, dangers, or the like; but soon return to their own formality and course; like mariners who sometimes meet with vehement winds, which seem to drive them with violence directly to their port; but quickly after they have an utter calm, and not a breath of air stirs to help them forward. Where this principle is, persons have a natural current which carries them on evenly and constantly: and though they may meet with tempests and cross winds, yet the stream, which is natural, works its way at length, and holds on its course through all impediments.

(3.) It is also permanent. It will never cease inclining the soul to acts of obedience, till it comes to the end of them all in the enjoyment of God. It is "a well of water, springing up into everlasting life." It springs up without intermission, because it is living water; and that permanently, never ceasing, till those in whom it is are safely lodged in glory. This is expressly promised in the covenant:—"I will put my fear in their hearts, and they shall not depart from me;" they shall never do so in whom is this fear, because it is permanent. It is true, that on the fierce interpositions of temptations, the principle itself may seem to be utterly stifled for a season (as in David's case); yet, such is its immortal nature, such its relation to the faithfulness of God and the mediation of Christ, that it shall never be entirely extinguished.

It must be admitted, that in those who are thus disposed to all the acts of spiritual life, there are yet the remains of a contrary principle; this the Scripture calls the *Flesh, Lust, the Body of Sin, the Sin* that dwelleth in us. This the apostle plainly asserts: "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." Gal. v. 17. Indeed, sin and grace cannot bear rule in the same heart at the same time. By nature the flesh is wholly predominant, constantly inclining the soul to sin; but, on the introduction of grace, this habit of sin is weakened, so that it shall not "reign" over us, by hurrying us into the pursuit of its uncontrollable inclinations; but yet it is never entirely dispossessed and cast out of the soul in this life. There it will remain and work, seduce and tempt, more or less, according to its remaining strength and advantages. Hence the principle of grace cannot perfectly incline the soul to the life of God, so that it should be sensible of no opposition; but this belongs to the principle of holiness inseparably and necessarily, that it inclines the soul universally to all acts of holy obedience; and these inclinations are predominant, and keep the soul pointed to holiness continually;—and this free, genuine, unforced inclination of the mind to all that is good, with an inward labouring to break through all opposition, is the first fruit and most pregnant evidence of the renovation of our natures by the Holy Ghost.

3. There is *power* accompanying this habit of grace, as well as propensity or inclination. It does not merely dispose the soul to holy obedience, but enables it to the acts and duties of it:—that by nature we are "without strength" to perform any thing spiritually good, has been proved at large; but by the grace of sanctification, a power and ability is given to us of living to God. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength;" that is, for obedience, or walking with God without weariness; strength they have, and in their walking with God it is renewed or increased. By the same grace are we "strengthened with all

might, according to the glorious power of God." In our conversion to God, all things are given to us by his "divine power, which pertain to life and godliness:"—so God told our apostle, when he was ready to faint under his temptations, that "his grace was sufficient for him." Believers are alive to God, alive to righteousness and holiness. They have a principle of spiritual life; and where there is life, there is power in its kind, and for its end. We shall therefore enquire wherein this power consists; what it is in the mind,—what in the will,—and what in the affections; and,

(1.) This power in the mind consists in a spiritual light to discern spiritual things in a spiritual manner. The Holy Spirit, in the first communication of spiritual life, shines into our hearts to give us the knowledge of God in Christ; yea, this strengthening of the mind by saving illumination, is the most eminent act of our sanctification: without this there is a veil upon us, that we cannot see into spiritual things; but where the Spirit of the Lord comes with his sanctifying grace, there is liberty; and thereby we all "with open face, beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory."

It is true, that all believers have not this ability in the same degree; some are very low in knowledge, and, in comparison of others, very ignorant; and some are kept in that condition by their own negligence and sloth; but every one who is truly sanctified, has light enough to understand the spiritual things of the gospel in a spiritual manner: the meanest believer has a spiritual insight into the things of God, so far as is necessary to his faith and obedience; for we have "received the Spirit of God, that we may know the things that are freely given us of God." Only it is their duty continually to endeavour the improvement of the light they have, in the use of means.

(2.) This power in the will consists in its freedom and ability to choose and embrace spiritual things. Believers have free-will to that which is spiritually good; for the will is now freed from that bondage to

sin which it was under by nature ; and being enlarged by light and love, willeth and chooseth freely the things of God. It is the truth (that is, faith in the gospel) which is the mean of this freedom ; and it is the Son of God by his Spirit who is the efficient cause of it ; “ for if the Son make us free, then are we free indeed ;” and otherwise we are not free, whatever men pretend.

(3.) The affections, which naturally are the principal servants and instruments of sin, are hereby engaged to God.

Having thus shewn that there is a power of holy obedience in all who are sanctified, as well as a propensity to it, we shall consider the two principal properties of it, which are readiness and facility.

1. It gives readiness, by removing all those incumbrances which the mind is apt to be hindered by, from sin, the world, spiritual sloth, and unbelief. Herein is the “ spirit ready though the flesh be weak.” These incumbrances are in their full power in all unregenerate persons ; whence they are “ unto every good work reprobate ;” and they partially influence the minds of believers themselves ; and this is no small part of their sin and trouble : but these hindrances are removed by this spiritual power. The absolute prevailing power of them is broken by the first infusion of this principle, wherein it gives an habitual preparation of heart for all the duties of obedience ; and by various degrees it frees believers from the remains of these incumbrances : for it weakens the bent of the soul to earthly things, so that they shall not possess the mind as formerly. It also gives an insight into the beauty and glory of holiness, and all duties of obedience, so as greatly to incline the mind to them ; and it causes the affections to cleave to them with delight. “ How do I love thy law,” saith David ; “ my delight is in thy statutes ; they are sweeter to me than the honey-comb.”

2. It gives facility in the performance of duties. Whatever men do from a habit, or from nature, they do with ease ; and the principle of grace is an infused habit, a new nature. I grant there will be opposition

from sin, Satan, and temptation ; but still it is the nature of this principle to make the whole course of obedience easy to us. For (1.) It introduces a suitability between our minds and our duties ; the law is written in our hearts, hence the commands of Christ are not grievous ; they do not appear burdensome, or unsuitable to the new nature. Hence "all the ways of Wisdom are pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

(2.) It keeps up the heart to a frequency of holy acts and duties ; and frequently gives facility. It puts the soul on reiterated acts of faith and love, or renewed holy thoughts and meditations. It is a spring continually bubbling up in daily exercises of prayer, reading, and holy discourse ; or in acts of mercy, charity, and bounty to men. The heart is thus so accustomed to the yoke of Christ, that it is natural and easy : and it will be found by experience, that the more we intermit any kind of duty, the more difficulty we find in it. (3.) It engages the assistance of Christ and his Spirit ; it is the new creature which Christ careth for, and to which he continually affords the supplies of his Spirit for its assistance ; and when the strength of Christ is engaged, then his yoke is easy, and his burden is light.

By these things we may inquire after the habit or principle of holiness in our own minds, that we be not deceived by false appearances.

(1.) Let us not think it sufficient to gospel-holiness that we have occasionally good purposes of forsaking sin, and living to God. Afflictions, sense of guilt, and fear of death, usually produce this frame. Few are so profligate as not, at one time or other, to project an amendment of life ; they will abstain from their old sins for a time, and perform some duties from which they expect relief to their consciences,—especially when the afflicting hand of God is upon them ; and this produces that kind of goodness which is "like the morning cloud, or the early dew ;" things that make a fair appearance, but quickly vanish : and though this is most remote from evangelical obedience, yet hereby multitudes delude themselves into eternal ruin.

(2.) And we may learn from hence not to be im-

posed upon by gifts, however useful, with a plausible profession thereon. These things go a great way in the world, and many deceive both themselves and others by them. By their help alone men may pray, and preach, and perform many duties, and so keep up an eminency in profession ; but all this may be without any holiness at all, and then they are apt to deceive the mind. Let them be examined by the nature and properties of that habit and principle of grace which is in all true holiness, as before explained, and it will quickly appear how far they come short of it.

Least of all can morality, or a course of moral duties, when alone, maintain any pretence hereto. We have had attempts to prove that morality is grace, and grace is morality, and nothing else. To be a holy man according to the gospel, and to be a moral man, is all one. Wherefore I shall proceed to the second thing proposed, and this is further to prove, that this habit, or gracious principle of holiness, is specifically distinct from all other habits of mind, whether intellectual or moral, natural or acquired ; as also from all that common grace of which any persons not really sanctified may be partakers ; and this difference is manifest :

First, From the special fountain and spring of holiness, which is the electing love of God. "He hath chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy." God chooseth us from eternity, that we should be holy, that is, with a design to communicate holiness to us ; it is therefore his special work, in pursuit of his special purpose.

Secondly, The special procuring cause of this holiness is the mediation of Christ. Evangelical holiness is purchased for us by Jesus Christ ; is promised to us on his account ; is actually impetrated by his intercession ; and is communicated to us by his Spirit ; for he it is who, of God, "is made unto us sanctification ;" and this he is on several accounts.

(1.) He is made unto us sanctification, with respect to his priestly office, because we are washed from our sins by his blood, in the oblation of it, and the appli-

cation of it to our souls. (2.) Because he prevails for the actual sanctification of our natures, in the communication of holiness to us by his intercession. His prayer (John xvii. 17.) is the blessed spring of our holiness: "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." There is no grace wrought in us, bestowed on us, or preserved in us, but in answer to the intercession of Christ. (3.) He is the rule and measure of holiness to us; the instrument of it is his word and doctrine. The inbred dictates of the light and law of nature, are not the rule of this holiness; nor is the written law itself so. It is the rule of original holiness, but not the adequate rule of that holiness to which we are restored by Christ; nor are both these together the instrument of producing holiness in us; but it is the doctrine of the gospel which is the adequate rule and immediate instrument of it. My meaning is, that the doctrine of Christ, in the preceptive part of it, is so the rule of all our obedience, as that all it requires belongs to it; and nothing else but what it requires does so; and the formal reason of our holiness consists in conformity thereto, under this consideration, that it is the word of Christ. Nothing belongs to holiness materially, but what the gospel requires; and nothing is so formally but what we do, because the Gospel requires it; and it is the instrument of it, because God makes use of it as the external means of communicating it to us. Principles of natural light direct to and exact the performance of many material duties of obedience. The written law requires all duties of original obedience: but there are some duties of evangelical holiness which the law knows nothing of: such are, the mortification of sin, godly sorrow, daily cleansing of our hearts, communion with God by Christ, with faith and love towards him; for though these things may be contained in the law radically, as it requires universal obedience to God, yet they are not so formally; and it is not used to beget faith and holiness in us: This is the effect of the Gospel only. This is "the power of God to salvation;" by the preaching of this it is that "faith cometh;" by the

hearing of this we "receive the Spirit;" and all the external obedience required of us is, that "our conversation be such as becometh the Gospel."

(4.) He is so, as he is the exemplary cause of our holiness. The design of God in our sanctification is, that "we may be conformed to the image of his Son." He is proposed to us in the purity of his nature, the holiness of his person, the glory of his graces, the innocency and usefulness of his conversation in the world, as the great example which in all things we ought to conform to.

Examples are universally allowed to be the most effectual ways of instruction; but when to this power which they have naturally and morally, things are peculiarly instituted of God to be our examples, their force and efficacy is increased. Now these both concur in the example of holiness given us in the person of Christ.

Jesus Christ is not only a perfect pattern of holiness, but he is the only one; there is no other complete example of it. The boasted examples of the heathens are full of flaws, and the best examples of the saints have their imperfections; but in this our great Exemplar, there was not the least variableness from the perfection of holiness. Jesus Christ is appointed for this purpose. One end why God sent his Son, was, that he might set us an example in our own nature, of that renovation of his image in us,—of that holy obedience which he requires of us. The angelical nature was not suited to this purpose; for what examples could angels have set us of patience in afflictions, or quietness in sufferings, seeing their nature is incapable of such things! Neither could we have had an example that was perfect in our own nature, but only in him who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.

The example of Christ has a peculiar efficacy in it by way of motive, beyond all other instituted examples. We are often called upon to "behold Christ," and to "look upon him;" not only for the purpose of justification, but as the great pattern of holiness; so that by God's appointment, our beholding him is a means of

the growth and increase of holiness in us. "We all with open face, beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

In this respect, therefore, is the Lord Christ made sanctification to us; and certainly we are most of us much to blame that we do not more abound in the use of this means. Did we abide more constantly in the contemplation of Christ, of the glory and beauty of his holiness as our great example, we should be more transformed into his image and likeness; but many who are called Christians, delight to talk of the virtuous actions of the Heathen; and are ready to make them the object of their imitation, while they have no thoughts of the grace that was in our Lord Jesus Christ, nor endeavour after conformity thereto; and the reason is, because the virtue they seek is of the same kind with that which was in the Heathens, and not of that grace which was in Christ Jesus; and we should always consider how we ought to act faith on Christ, with respect to this end. Let none be guilty practically of what some are falsely charged with as to doctrine. Let none divide in the work of faith, and exercise themselves in only half of it. To believe in Christ for justification is but one half of the duty of faith. It respects Christ only as he died for us, as he made atonement for our sins. For this end he is first and principally proposed to us; but this is not all. He is also proposed to us as our example; and it is a cursed imagination, that the only end of his life and death was to exemplify and confirm the doctrine of holiness which he taught,—so to neglect his so being our example, in considering him by faith to that end, is evil and pernicious. Wherefore, let us be much in the contemplation of what he was, and what he did; how in all instances of duties and trials he carried himself till an image of his perfect holiness is implanted in our minds, and we are made like him thereby.

5. That which principally distinguishes evangelical holiness from all other natural or moral habits or duties, is, that from Christ as our head, constant sup-

plies of grace are received. On the proof hereof, the whole difference about grace and morality depends; for if that which men call Morality be so derived from Christ, by virtue of our union with him, it is evangelical grace; if it be not, it is either nothing, or somewhat of another nature and kind; for grace it is not.

Whatever grace God bestows on any persons, is in and through Jesus Christ, as Mediator. God himself is the absolute Fountain of all grace and holiness. From his own fulness he communicates to his creatures, either by the way of nature, or by the way of grace. In our first creation, God implanted his image in us: and had we continued in that state, the same would have been communicated by natural propagation; but since the fall and entrance of sin, it is not communicated by way of nature. If it were, there would be no necessity that every one who is born should be born again, as our Saviour affirms that there is. "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh," and nothing else. Now God communicates nothing in a way of grace to any, but in and by the person of Christ. In the old creation, all things were made by him; and so it is in the new creation, both in the raising, and in the support of the whole. God doth work real, sanctifying grace in believers, whereby they are enabled to believe, and are made holy; and doth really sanctify them more and more, that they may be preserved blameless to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Whatever is wrought in believers by the Spirit of Christ, is by the virtue of their union to the person of Christ. By him we are united to Christ, that is, to his person;—"For he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit;" and by virtue of that union, the Spirit communicates all grace to us from Christ, for the edification, preservation, and further sanctification of the whole mystical body, making every member of it "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light."

We have already proved,—That the immediate efficient cause of all gospel-holiness is the Spirit of God:—That it is also a fruit and effect of the covenant of grace:—and that herein consists the image of God,

into which we are to be renewed ; and from what has been thus briefly discoursed, we may take a prospect of that horrible mixture of ignorance and impudence, with which some contend that the practice of moral virtue is all the holiness required of us in the Gospel.

Virtuous living, some tell us, is the way to Heaven ; but what this virtue is, or what is a life of virtue, they have added as little in the declaration of, as any persons that ever made such a noise about them. Many seem to mean no more by it but that honesty and integrity of life which was found among some of the Heathens ; and indeed, I wish we could see more of it among some that are called Christians ; for many things they did were materially good, and useful to mankind ; but let it be supposed to be ever so exact, I deny it to be the holiness required of us in the Gospel, because it has none of those qualifications which we have proved to be essential to it.

Some describe morality as being of the same extent with the law of nature, as rectified and declared to us in the Scripture. Religion, say they, before the entrance of sin, and under the Gospel, is one and the same ; but is there no alteration made in religion by the interposition of the person of Christ to be incarnate, and his mediation ? No augmentation of the object of faith ? No alteration in the principles, aids, and whole nature of our obedience to God ? The whole mystery of godliness must be renounced, if we give way to such imaginations.

If it be said, that by this moral virtue they intend no exclusion of Jesus Christ, but include a respect to him, — I ask then, Whether they design by it such a habit of mind, and such acts proceeding from it, as have the properties before described, as to their causes, effects, and relation to Christ. Is this moral virtue what God has chosen us to from eternity ? Is it what he works in us, in pursuit of electing love ? Is it that which gives us a new heart, with the law of God written in it ? Or is it a principle of spiritual life, disposing and enabling us to live to God, and produced in us by the effectual operation of the Holy Ghost ? Is

it that which is purchased for us by Jesus Christ, and the increase of which he continues to intercede for? Is it the image of God in us, and does our conformity to Christ consist in it? If it be so, then the whole contest is, Whether the Holy Ghost or these men be wisest, and know best how to express the things of God rationally and significantly? But if the moral virtue they speak of be unconcerned in these things; if it may and doth consist without them,—it will appear at length to be no more, as to our acceptance before God, than what one of the greatest moralists in the world complained that he found it, when he was dying,—a mere empty name.

CHAPTER VII.

Of the Acts and Duties of Holiness.

In the beginning of the former chapter, we laid down two assertions: I. That there is in the souls of believers a supernatural principle or habit of grace, whereby they are enabled to live to God, and that this is essentially distinct from all other habits. We proceed now to the second assertion, namely,

II. That there is an immediate work of the Holy Spirit required unto every act of holy obedience, whether internal or external.

All the acts and duties of gospel-obedience may be referred to two heads: 1. Such as have the will of God in positive commands for their object. (2.) Such as respect divine prohibitions. The duties of the first sort are either internal only; or external also. There may be internal acts of holiness that have no external effects; but no external acts or duties are any part of holiness which are external only, and not sanctified by internal actings of grace. Two persons may perform the same duty, and in the same outward manner; yet it may be the duty of evangelical holiness in the one, and not in the other: as it was with Abel and Cain.

(1.) By the duties of holiness that are internal only, I intend all acts of faith, love, hope, that have God for

their immediate object, but are not exerted in any external duties; and in these our spiritual life chiefly consists. We may abound in outward duties, and yet be much alienated from the life of God: yea, sometimes men endeavour to supply that defect by a multitude of such duties; and so have "a name to live, while they are dead."

(2.) Duties that are external also, are distinguished with respect to their object and end. God himself is the object and end of some of them, as of prayer and praise; and of this nature are all those which belong to the first table. Others have men in their various capacities and relations as their object, but God as their end. Now all these duties, whether internal only, or external also, proceed from a peculiar operation of the Holy Spirit in us; and to make our intention the more evident, we may distinctly observe, (1.) That there is in all believers an habitual disposition to the performance of all holy duties. (2.) That no believer can of himself actually exert this principle in any one instance of duty, internal or external, so that it shall be an act of holiness, or a duty accepted with God. Therefore, (3.) That the actual assistance and internal operation of the Spirit of God is necessary, required to the producing of every holy act of our minds, in every duty whatever.

As it is in our natural lives with respect to God's providence, so it is in our spiritual lives with respect to his grace. He has, in the works of nature, endowed us with a vital principle, by which we have a fitness and habitual power for all vital actions; yet so, as without the concurrence of God in his energetical providence we can do nothing; for in him "we live, and move, and have our being;" and if any one could of himself perform an action without any concurrence of divine operation, he must himself be absolutely the first and only cause of that action, that is, the Creator of a new being. It is so as to our spiritual life. We are furnished with a principle of it, disposing us to live to God. He who has not this principle is spiritually dead, and can do nothing at all that is spiritually good.

The enquiry is, What believers themselves, who are habitually sanctified, can do as to actual duties by virtue thereof; and I say, they can no more do any thing spiritually good, without the particular concurrence of the grace of God, than a man can naturally do any thing in an absolute independence on God, his power and providence. This analogy between the works of providence and grace is expressed, "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works," &c. Eph. ii. 10. When God had produced all things out of nothing by his creating power, he did not leave them to their own powers; but he sustains and preserves them in the principles of their beings and operations. Without an incessant emanation of divine power, the whole fabric of Nature would dissolve into confusion and nothing. Thus also it is in the New Creation. "We are the workmanship of God;" formed for himself, and fitted for good works, which he has appointed as the way of our living to him. This new creature he supports and preserves; for without his continual influential power it would perish and come to nothing; but this is not all. He effectually concurs to every single duty, by new supplies of actual grace. This we shall confirm.

First. The Scripture declares that we ourselves cannot, by virtue of any strength or power we have received, do any thing. So our Saviour tells the apostles, when they were sanctified believers, "Without me ye can do nothing;"—separated from me, as a branch may be from a vine. Unless believers have uninterrupted influences of grace from Christ, "they can do nothing;"—nothing which appertains to fruit-bearing. Now every act of faith and love, every motion of our minds or affections toward God, is a part of our "fruit-bearing;" and so are all external duties of obedience. Wherefore, our Lord being Judge, believers themselves cannot, without new actual supplies of grace, do any thing spiritually good.

Our apostle confirms the same truth: "And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward; not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of

ourselves ; but our sufficiency is of God." 2 Cor. iii. 4, 5. It is an eminent grace which he declares that he was acting, namely, trust in God in the discharge of his ministry, and for the success of it. But he had no sooner expressed it, than he seems to be jealous lest he should appear to have assumed something to himself ; and therefore he adds a caution against any such apprehension, and renounces any such power or sufficiency in himself :—"Not that we are sufficient of ourselves." And he excludes such a sufficiency with respect not only to eminent acts and duties, but even to a good thought, or whatever may tend to a spiritual duty ;—for it is the beginning of duties which the apostle expresses by thinking, our thoughts being the first thing that belongs to our actions. We cannot engage in the beginning of any duty by our own sufficiency : but "our sufficiency is of God ;" that is, we have it by actual supplies of grace, as necessary to every duty ; and how God communicates this sufficiency, the apostle declares in chap. ix. verse 8 : "God is able to make all grace abound towards you, that ye always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." God manifests the abounding of grace towards us, when he works an effective sufficiency in us, so as to enable us to abound in good works, or duties of holiness. These are the effects of grace, and must be wrought in us by the Holy Ghost, who is the immediate author of all divine operations.

Secondly. All actings of grace, all good duties, are actually ascribed to the Spirit of God. The particular testimonies to this purpose in Scripture are so multiplied, that we can mention only a few by way of instance, and which may be reduced to three heads.

(1.) There are many texts wherein we are said to be led, guided, acted by the Spirit ; to live in the Spirit ; to walk after the Spirit ; to do things by the Spirit that dwelleth in us. For nothing in general can be intended in these expressions but the actings of the Holy Spirit on our souls ; in a compliance with which, as acting when we are actuated by him, our obedience to God according to the Gospel consists : "Walk in

the Spirit." Gal. v. 16. To walk in the Spirit, is to walk in obedience to God, according to the supplies of grace which the Spirit administers to us; for so, it is added, "we shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." So we are said to be "led by the Spirit" (verse 18.) being actuated by him; and not by the vicious principles of our corrupt nature: "Walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Rom. viii. 4. To walk after the flesh, is to have the principles of indwelling sin, actuating us to the production of actual sins. Wherefore, to walk after the Spirit, is to have the Spirit acting in us, to the effecting of all gracious acts; and we are commanded not to neglect his motions in us, but comply with them in a way of diligence and duty: see verse 14, 15. So we are enjoined to attend to particular duties "through the Holy Ghost that dwelleth in us" (2 Tim. i. 14.) that is, through his assistance.

(2.) He is declared to be the author of all gracious actings in us: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance." All these are wrought and produced in us by the Spirit, for they are his fruits; and not only the habit of them, but all their actings, in all their exercise, are from him. So in another place he adds an universal affirmative, comprehending all instances of particular graces, Ephes. v. 9. "The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth."

(3.) Particular graces are assigned to his influences: "We, through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness by faith." The hope of the righteousness of faith, is the thing hoped for thereby. All that we expect in this world or hereafter, is by the righteousness of faith. This we do not of ourselves, but through the Spirit. "We worship God in the Spirit." "We love the brethren in the Spirit." We "purify our souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren."

Thirdly. There are direct testimonies to the position as before laid down:—"It is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Phil. ii. 13. The things thus wrought pertain to our

obedience and salvation : " Work out your salvation with fear and trembling." Two things are necessary to this end. Power for such operations ; and the actual exercise of that power. The whole work of grace consists in the internal acts of our wills, and external operations in suitable duties. This therefore is incumbent on us, to stir up and exercise the grace we have received in and to its proper operations ; but it is so our duty, as that of ourselves we cannot perform it. It is God who worketh effectually in us all those gracious acts of our wills, and all holy operations in a way of duty. Every act of our wills, so far as it is holy, is the act of the Spirit of God efficiently ; he worketh in us to will, or the very act of willing. The apostle says, " I laboured abundantly ; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." 1 Cor. xv. 10. He was obliged to declare his great labour in preaching the Gospel ; but, lest any one should think he ascribed something to himself, he immediately adds, " Yet, not I ;"—let me not be mistaken ; it was not I, by any power of mine, but it was all wrought in me by the free grace of the Spirit of God. " Not I, but grace," is the apostle's assertion.

CHAPTER VIII.

Mortification of Sin, and the Nature and Causes of it.

THE duties of holiness, we have observed, are of two kinds. (1.) Such as have the will of God in positive commands for their object ; and (2.) Such as respect divine prohibitions. The first, which we have just insisted on, concerns the improvement and practice of the principle of grace ; the second, which we now propose, respects the weakening, impairing, and destroying the contrary principle of sin ; and as the Spirit is every where said to sanctify us, we ourselves are constantly commanded to mortify our sins ; for sanctification expresses grace given and received in general ; mortification, grace improved to a certain

end ; and there are two things to be considered. (1.) The nature of the duty itself ; (2.) The manner in which it is wrought in us by the Holy Ghost ; which last, I principally intend.

It is well known, that this duty is frequently prescribed to us. "Mortify, therefore, your members that are on the earth, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry." Col. iii. 5. By our members, we are to understand, not the parts or members of our natural bodies, as though they were to be destroyed, but our carnal affections ; some of the fruits of which are mentioned, as fornication, &c. And these are "on the earth ;" that is, they are earthly and sensual. They are called *our members*, because the whole principle of sin, and course of sin proceeding from it, are called "the body of sin ; with respect to which, particular lusts are termed Members. These affections and lusts are used as naturally and readily by the old man, or depraved nature, as the body uses its members ; and, which adds efficacy to the allusion, by them it draws the very members of the body into a compliance with it, and service of it ; against which we are cautioned by the apostle, "Let not sin reign in your mortal bodies, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof" (Rom. vi. 12) ; which exhortation he pursues (ver. 19.) "As ye have yielded your members servants unto uncleanness and to iniquity, even so now yield your members servants to righteousness."

And concerning this great duty, we may consider three things :—1. The name of it ; 2. The nature of it ; 3. The ways and means whereby it is effected.

1. The name of it, which is to mortify. Two words in the original are used for this purpose. The first (*NEKROSATE*, Col. iii. 5.) which signifies *to mortify*, *destroy*, or *extinguish* all that vigour of corrupt nature which inclines to earthly carnal things. It signifies a continued act in taking away the power of any thing, till it comes to be dead, to some certain ends and purposes. There is another word to the same purpose

(*THANATOUTI*, Rom. viii. 13) which also signifies, *to put to death*.

The same duty, with relation to the death of Christ, as its efficient and exemplary cause, is expressed by crucifying: "Our old man is crucified with him." *Rom. vi. 6*.—"I am crucified with Christ." *Gal. ii. 20*.—"By Jesus Christ, the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." *vi. 14*. This expression may intimate, that sin is mortified gradually, as a man dies on the cross; but it chiefly intends the relation of this duty to the death of Christ; whence we and our sins are said to be crucified with him, because we and they are so by virtue of his death: and herein we always "bear about in the body the dying of our Lord Jesus Christ;"—representing the manner, and expressing the efficacy of it.

Secondly,—We shall consider the nature of this duty: and we may observe, 1. Mortification of sin is a duty always incumbent on us. No man under Heaven can say, at any time, that he is exempted from it: and he who ceases from this duty, lets go all endeavours after holiness. As for those who pretend to absolute perfection, they are of all persons living the most impudent; nor do they ever open their mouths in this matter without giving themselves the lie. For,

2. This duty being always incumbent on us, argues undeniably the continuance of that principle of sin which is to be mortified. This the Scripture calls the "sin that dwelleth in us;" "the evil that is present with us;" "the law of the members;" and to this are ascribed the properties and actings of folly, deceit, rebelling, warring, and captivating.

3. Indwelling sin, which is the object of this duty of mortification, includes, (1.) The root or principle of sin, which by nature possesses all our faculties, and inclines us to all evil: this is called the Old Man, in opposition to the New Man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness. (2.) There is the inclination, actual disposition, and operation of this principle, which is called the "body of sin;"—the affections and lusts of the flesh;" &c. (3.) There are the

effects and fruits of these things, which are actual sins, whereby we "serve sin:" and these are either internal, in the imaginations of the heart; or external, in actual sins; such as are enumerated by our apostle, Gal. v. 19, &c. All these together, make up the complete object of this duty of mortification.

4. This principle, its operations, and effects, are directly opposed to the principle, operations, and fruits of holiness. (1.) They are opposed in their principle; for "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other." These adverse principles maintain that conflict in the souls of believers, which is so well delineated in the seventh chapter of Romans. (2.) They are opposed in their actings. The lusting or desires of the flesh, and the desires of the Spirit; walking after the flesh, and walking after the Spirit; living after the flesh, and living after the Spirit, are all opposed to each other. By "walking after the flesh," I understand, not merely the commission of actual sins, but a compliance with the principle of sin; allowing it a supremacy in the heart. To "walk after the Spirit," consists in our being given up to the rule and conduct, or walking according to the dispositions and inclinations of the Spirit; the principle of grace implanted in us by him; and (3.) They are opposed in their external fruits and effects. For as actual sins, adultery, fornication, and the like, are mentioned by the apostle among the works of the flesh (Gal. v. 19—24) so among the fruits of the Spirit, he insists on habitual graces, as love, joy, and peace.

5. There being this universal contention between grace and sin, mortification consists in a constant taking part with grace; for the residence of these contrary principles being in, and their actings being by the same faculties of the soul, as the one is strengthened and improved, the other must of necessity be weakened and decay. The mortification of sin, therefore, must consist in these three things: (1.) In cherishing the principle of grace by all the means which God has appointed; without which all the attempts of

men to subdue their sins will be labour in vain. (2.) In frequent actings of the principle of grace, in all the duties of holy obedience ; for where the inclinations of the soul are kept in constant and vigorous exercise, the contrary motions of the flesh are defeated. (3.) In a due application of the principle and actings of grace, by way of opposition to the principle and actings of sin. As the whole of grace is opposed to the whole of sin, so there is no particular lust ; but there is a particular grace ready to make effectual opposition to it. In this consists the mystery of mortification ; through ignorance of which many foolish ways have been invented, opposing external force to an inward depraved principle.

6. This great duty is called *Mortification*, or *Putting to Death*. (1.) Because sin, having a powerful and constant inclination, and working actually towards all evil, is said to live, or to have a life of its own ; therefore the opposition that is made to it, for its destruction, is called *Mortification*. (2.) Because of the violence that is necessary in this contest. Other duties, to which we are called, may be performed in a more easy and gentle manner. Though we must wrestle with principalities and powers in our conflict with temptations, yet in this conflict which we have with ourselves, there is more of fighting, wounding, and crying out for help : there is a deeper sense of such a violence as is used in taking away the life of a mortal enemy, than in any thing else we are called to. (3.) Because the end designed in this duty is destruction, as it is in all killing. Sin has a life, by which it reigns in all natural men. By the entrance of grace into the soul, it loses its dominion, but not its being : its rule, but not its life. But the design of this duty is, the utter destruction of all the remains of this cursed life of sin ; it is, to leave sin neither being, life, nor operation.

From hence it is evident, that the mortification of sin is a gradual work. We must be exercised in it every day, and in every duty. Sin will not die, unless it be constantly weakened. Spare it, and it will heal its wounds, and recover its strength. We must contin-

ually watch against the operations of this principle of sin; in our duties, in our calling, in conversation, in retirement, in our enjoyments, and in all that we do. If we are negligent on any occasion, we shall suffer by it; every mistake, every neglect is perilous.

It may be justly feared, that the nature of this duty is mistaken by many. Some look upon it as an easy task; but is it for nothing that the Holy Spirit expresses it by mortification or killing? Certainly this intimates a violent contest. Every thing will do its utmost to preserve its life. Let no man think to kill sin with a few gentle strokes. He who has once smitten a serpent, if he follow not his blow till it be slain, may repent that ever he began the quarrel; and so will he who undertakes to deal with sin, if he pursue it not constantly to death; sin will revive, and the man must die. Again: The principle of sin is *in us*, and is called *ourselves*. It cannot be killed without a sense of pain. It is compared to cutting off right hands, and plucking out right eyes. Lusts, that pretend to be useful and pleasant to the flesh, will not be mortified without sensible violence. It is also a fatal mistake to make only some particular lusts, or actual sins, the objects of this duty. Many persons will make head against particular sins, but in general with little success; sin gets ground upon them, and they groan under its power; and the reason is, because they mistake the business. Contests against particular sins, are only to comply with light and convictions. Mortification, with a design for holiness, respects the body of sin, the root and all its branches. The first will miscarry; the latter will succeed.

Thirdly. We must consider the *way* in which mortification of sin is effected. Now the Holy Spirit is the author of this work in us, so that though it is our duty, it is his grace whereby it is performed. This is asserted in Rom. viii. 13: "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body." We are to mortify the flesh: but of ourselves we cannot do it; it must be done in or by the Spirit. The proof of this is the principal design of the apostle from the 2d verse of that

chapter to the end of the thirteenth : that the reign of sin, in the minds of believers, is impaired, and finally destroyed by the Holy Ghost ; and that this could not otherwise be effected, he both affirms and proves at large. This being sufficiently evident, it remains only that we shew the manner in which he produces this effect.

I. The foundation of all mortification of sin, is from the inhabitation of the Spirit in us. He dwells in the persons of believers as in his temple. Those pollutions which render the souls of men unfit for his abode, consisting in sin inherent in its effects, he removes and subdues, that he may dwell in them suitably to his holiness ; and as this is the only spring of mortification in us, as it is a grace, so the consideration of it is the principal motive to it as a duty. " Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost," which is in you, which you have of God ? And again, " Know you not that ye are the temple of God ?"

II. The manner of the actual operation of the Spirit in this work is to be considered. It is the vicious corrupt habit of sin that is to be mortified ; and this he doth, 1. By implanting in our minds a contrary principle, with contrary dispositions. Sin will no otherwise die but by being killed ; and as this is to be gradually done, it must be by conflict. There must be something in us that is contrary to it, which, by constant opposition, gradually works out its ruin and destruction. As in a chronical distemper, the disease continually combats with the powers of nature, till it prevails to its dissolution, so it is in this matter. The contrary principles are flesh and spirit ; and their contrary actings are in warring against each other, Gal. v. 16. " Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." Not to fulfil the lusts of the flesh is to mortify it ; for it cannot live if its lusts be not fulfilled ; and he gives a fuller account hereof, verse 17. " For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh." If the Spirit of God is here intended, yet he lusteth not in us, but by virtue of that spirit which is born of him. The issue of the whole

is, "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with its affections and lusts," they have fastened it to the cross, where at length it must expire. Hence he shuts up his discourse with that exhortation, "If we live in the Spirit, let us walk in the Spirit;" that is, if we are endowed with this spiritual principle of life, then let us improve it to the ruin and mortification of sin. Growing in grace, and thriving in holiness, is the great way of mortifying sin; for the more vigorous the principle of holiness is, the more weak and infirm will be that of sin. The more frequent and lively the actings of grace, the feebler and seldomer will be the actings of sin. The more we abound in the fruits of the Spirit, the less shall we be concerned in the works of the flesh. This is the only way to ruin sin. Bring a man to the law, urge him with the purity of its doctrine, the authority of its commands, the severity of its threatenings, and the dreadful consequences of its transgression: suppose him hereby convinced of the evil and danger of sin, and of the necessity of its mortification,—will he be able hereon to discharge his duty, so that sin may die and his soul may live? The apostle assures us to the contrary, Rom. vii. 7, 8, 9. The whole effect of the law, as to indwelling sin, is only to irritate and increase its guilt. This, therefore, is the first way whereby the Holy Spirit enables us to mortify sin, namely, by cherishing the principle of holiness in our souls.

2. The Holy Ghost carries on this work by actual supplies of his grace; for the same divine aids are as necessary to this as to any positive duty of holiness. So the apostle concludes his account of the conflict between sin and grace, with that good word,—“I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord;” namely, who supplies me with gracious assistances against the power of sin. Temptation is successful only by sin; and it was with respect to a peculiar temptation that Christ gave that answer to the apostle,—“My grace is sufficient for thee.” The actual supply of the Spirit of Christ enables us to withstand our temptations, and subdue our corruptions. This is that “additional

supply" as occasion requires, beyond our daily provision ; or grace given in seasonably on our cry made for it, Phil. i. 19. In the life of faith, the expectation and derivation of these supplies of grace, is one principal part of our duty. These things are not empty notions, as some imagine. If Christ be our head of influence ; if he be our life : if our life be in him, and we have nothing but what we receive from him, then is this expectation and derivation of spiritual strength from him, the way we must take for the actual mortification of sin. We must diligently seek for these supplies in the ways and means whereby they are communicated ; for though the Lord Christ gives them freely, yet our diligence in duty will give the measure of receiving them. If we are negligent in prayer, meditation, reading, hearing the word, and other ordinances of divine worship, we have no ground to expect any great supplies to this end. We must also abound in the actual exercise of those graces which are most directly opposite to our peculiar corruptions ; for sin and grace try their strength in particular instances. If, therefore, any are more than ordinarily subject to the power of any corruption, as passion, inordinate affections, love of the world, distrust of God,—unless they are constant in the exercise of those graces which are most diametrically opposed to them, they will continually suffer under the power of sin.

3. It is the Holy Spirit who directs us to, and helps us in, those duties which are appointed to be the means of mortifying sin.

(1.) It is necessary that we be well acquainted with the nature, use, and end of those duties. For want of this knowledge, all sorts of men have wandered after foolish imaginations about this work, either as to the nature of it, or the means of effecting it. A general apprehension that something of this kind is necessary, arising from the observation of the disordered passions and wicked lives of most men, is suited even to the light of nature, and from thence was variously improved by the philosophers of old: To this purpose

they gave many instructions about moderating and conquering the disorderly passions of the mind; but while their discoveries of sin rose no higher than the actual disorder they found in the affections; while they knew nothing of the depravity of the mind itself, and had nothing to oppose to what they did discover but moral considerations, they never attained to any thing of the same kind with the due mortification of sin.

If we take a view of the appearance of this duty among the Papists, we shall find it all disappointed; for being ignorant of the only true way of effecting it, they have invented innumerable false ones of their own. Hence arose their austerities, disciplines, fastings, and the like: but when all was done, they found them insufficient; sin was not destroyed, nor conscience pacified. This made them betake themselves to Purgatory. Here they hope all will be set right, when they are gone out of the world. These things are not said to condemn even external severities, in their proper place. Our nature is apt to run into extremes. Because we see the vanity of the Papists, in placing mortification of sin in an outward appearance of it, we are apt to think that all things of that nature are utterly needless. But the truth is, I shall much suspect their internal mortification, who always pamper the flesh, conform to the world, and live in idleness and pleasure; yea, it is high time that professors should retrench that course of life, in fulness of diet, gaiety of dress, expense of time in vain conversation, which many are fallen into; but these outward austerities of themselves will never produce the effect designed. As to many of them, they are the inventions of men, and were never appointed or blessed of God for any such purpose; nor is there efficacy in the rest of them, but as they are subordinate to other spiritual duties. So Jerome gives us an honest instance in himself; telling us, that while he lived in his horrid wilderness in Judea, his mind would be in the sports and revels at Rome; and thus will all self-devised ways of mortification end. It is the Spirit of

God alone who leads us into the exercise of those duties whereby it may be carried on.

(2.) It is necessary that those duties be rightly performed ; in faith, and to the glory of God. The duties particularly appointed to this end are, prayer, meditation, watchfulness, abstinence, and wisdom, or circumspection with respect to temptations. It will not suffice that we are exercised in them in general ; but we must apply them to this particular case, designing in and by them the mortification of sin. No man, who wisely considers himself, his condition, and temptations, can be wholly ignorant of his special corruptions. David probably had respect to this when he said "I kept myself from mine iniquity." Now, he could not have done this, had he not known and kept a watch upon that sin which most easily beset him. On this discovery, we are to apply these duties purposely for the ruin of the power of sin ;—and as they are all useful and necessary, so circumstances will direct which of them, in particular, is most necessary. Sometimes prayer and meditation claim this place, as when our danger arises solely from ourselves, our own perverse inclinations, or unruly passions ; sometimes watchfulness and abstinence, when sin takes occasion from temptations, and concerns in the world :—sometimes wisdom and circumspection, when the avoidance of temptations and opportunities for sin is particularly necessary.

All these duties, rightly improved, work two ways towards the end designed. 1. Morally, as they procure assistance ; and, 2. Really, by an immediate opposition to sin, whence assimilation to holiness arises.

(1.) These duties work morally. I shall instance only in prayer. The first work of prayer, with respect to sin, is complaint :—the soul "pours out its complaint to God, and sheweth before him the trouble" it undergoeth on account of it. Thus David expresseth himself, "Attend unto me, and hear me ; I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise." Psalm lv. 2. His prayer was a doleful lamentation. This part of prayer is indeed despised by profligate men, but is acceptable

with God ; and therein believers find ease and rest for their souls :—for, let the world scoff as it pleases, what is more acceptable to God than for his children, out of pure love to him and holiness, out of fervent desires to comply with his mind and will, and thereby to attain conformity to Jesus Christ, to come with their complaints to him, of the distance they are kept at from these things by the captivating power of sin ; bewailing their frail condition, and humbly acknowledging all the evils they are liable to on account thereof ? He owns believers as his children, and has the bowels of a father towards them. Sin he knows to be their greatest enemy, and which fights directly against their souls. Will he then despise their complaints ? Will he not avenge them of that enemy, and that speedily ?

Prayer also includes petitions to God for supplies of grace to conquer sin : I need not prove this :—No man prays as he ought ; but these petitions make a part of this prayer ; especially when the mind is peculiarly engaged in the design of destroying sin ; and these requests are wrought in us by the Holy Ghost, who therein “maketh intercession for us according to the will of God,” and carries on this work of the mortification of sin ; for his work it is.

(2.) This duty has a real efficiency to the same end : when rightly performed, it mightily prevails to the weakening and destruction of sin ; for in and by fervent prayer the habit and inclinations of the soul to universal holiness, with a detestation and abhorrence of all sin, are cherished and strengthened. Believers are never raised to a higher intention of spirit in the pursuit of holiness than in prayer ; and hence they often come from it above all impressions from sin, as to any inclinations and compliances. Would such a frame always continue, how happy were we ! But abiding in the duty is the best way of reaching out after it.

4. The Holy Spirit carries on this work, by applying the death of Christ unto us for that end ; and this also the world despises, because it does not understand it : but yet, in whomsoever the death of Christ is not

the death of sin, he shall die in his sins. That the death of Christ has a special influence in the mortification of sin, is plainly testified in the Scripture. By his cross, that is, his death on the cross, "We are crucified unto the world;" "Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed;" that is, sin is mortified by virtue of the death of Christ. By the oblation of his death, our sins are expiated as to their guilt; and by the application of it to us, they are subdued as to their power. For it is an interest in the benefits of his death, which we call the application of it unto us. The old man is said to be crucified with Christ on two accounts:—(1.) Of conformity. Christ is the head of the new creation. Whatever God designed for us therein, he first exemplified in him; and we are "predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son." We are, by grace, "planted in the likeness of his death," being made "conformable to his death," and so are "dead with Christ." Now this conformity is not in our natural death, for it is what we partake of in this life; but Christ died for our sin, which was the procuring cause of it, and he lived again by the power of God. A likeness to this, God will work in all believers. There is by nature a life of sin in them. This life must be destroyed; sin must die in us, and we thereby become dead to sin; and as he rose again, so are we to be quickened to newness of life. The same Spirit who wrought these things in Christ, will, in the pursuit of his design, work that which answers to them in all his members.

(2.) In respect of efficacy; virtue goes from the death of Christ for the destruction of sin. It was not designed to be "an inactive example, but it is accompanied with a power conforming us to its own likeness: it is the ordinance of God to that end. It is by a "fellowship," or participation "in his sufferings," that we are made "conformable to his death." The death of Christ is designed to be the death of sin; let them who are dead in sin deride it while they please. If Christ had not died, sin had never died in any sinner to eternity.

If it be asked, How is the death of Christ applied to us? or, How do we apply ourselves to the death of Christ for this purpose? I answer, We do it by faith and love.

(1.) By faith. The way to derive virtue from Christ, is by touching him. So the diseased woman in the gospel touched but the hem of his garment, and virtue went forth from him to heal her. It was not her touching him outwardly, but her faith that derived virtue from him: for so our Saviour tells her in his answer: "Daughter, be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole;" but to what end was the touching of his garment? It was only a token of the particular application of the healing power of Christ to her soul, or of her faith in him for that end; for at the same time many thronged upon him; yet none was benefited but the poor sick woman:—a great emblem this, of common profession on the one hand, and of special faith on the other. Multitudes throng about Christ in a profession of faith, but no virtue goeth forth from him to heal them; but when any one, though poor, and seemingly at a distance, gets but the least touch of him by special faith, that soul is healed.

But how will sin be mortified hereby? I say, How were they healed who looked to the brazen serpent? Was it not because that was an ordinance of God, which he made effectual to that purpose? The death of Christ being so, as to the crucifying of sin, when it is looked on by faith, shall not divine virtue go forth to that end? Besides, faith itself, as acted on the death of Christ, has a peculiar efficacy to the subduing of sin; for, beholding him thereby "as in a glass, we are changed into the same image." Moreover, it is the only means whereby we actually derive from Christ the benefits of our union with him; from thence we have all grace, or, there is no such thing in the world: and the communication of it unto us, is by the exercise of faith principally. So it being acted with respect to his death, we have grace for the killing of sin, and hereby become dead with him, crucified with him, and buried with him: and those by whom ~~this~~ means of

mortification is despised, must live under the power of sin, to whatever inventions they may look for deliverance. According as we abound herein, will be our success.—Those who are careless in the exercise of faith by prayer and meditation, will find that sin will keep its ground, and maintain its power; but those who are much conversant with the death of Christ by holy actings of faith, will be implanted into the likeness of it, and experience the death of sin in them continually.

(2.) We do it by love. Christ, as crucified, is the great object of our love; for therein he is to sinners “altogether lovely.” In the death of Christ, his unsearchable grace, his infinite condescension, his patient suffering, his victorious power, shine forth in the most conspicuous manner. Thus he is represented in and by the gospel, “crucified before our eyes:” and thus he is beheld by the eye of faith, as the proper object of sincere love. The soul of the believer cleaves to Christ crucified, so as to be in some sense always present with him on the cross; and hence ensues assimilation or conformity. It is in the nature of love to produce a likeness between the mind loving, and the object beloved: and so I am sure it is so in this matter. A mind filled with the love of Christ as crucified, will be changed into its image and likeness, by the effectual mortification of sin.

5. The Holy Ghost carries on this work, by making constant discoveries to believers of the true nature and certain end of sin, on the one hand, and the beauty, excellency, and necessity of holiness on the other, with the concerns of Christ, the gospel, and their own souls therein. Not that the rational consideration of these things is of itself sufficient for the mortification of sin; for there is an obstinacy in the heart, not conquerable by mere arguments: that conviction of sin and righteousness, which is prevalent to this end, is wrought in us by the Holy Ghost. John xvi. 8. Though he makes use of our understandings and consciences in this matter, yet if he give not a peculiar efficacy to them, the work will not be effectual. When he is

pleased to make use of reasons and motives taken from the nature and end of sin and holiness for the mortification of sin, they shall hold good, and bind the soul to this duty, against all temptations that would divert it.

And thus I have briefly delineated the work of the Spirit in the SANCTIFICATION of believers. Many things might have been more enlarged; but what has been said, I judge sufficient to my present purpose. What has been argued from Scripture and experience, is, I doubt not, sufficient to direct us in the practice of true evangelical holiness: and to prevail with all sober persons to reject that fulsome product of pride and ignorance, that all gospel-holiness consists in the practice of moral virtues.

BOOK V.

THE NECESSITY OF HOLINESS.

CHAPTER I.

The Necessity of Holiness argued from the Nature of God.

I SHALL close this discourse with the consideration of the necessity of holiness, the reasons of that necessity, and the principal motives to it ;—and for our encouragement herein, this necessity is such as all sorts of Christians allow, plead for, and pretend to. For, as the gospel is eminently “the truth, or doctrine which is according to godliness,” or that which is suited to the attainment and practice of it, none can with modesty refuse the trial of their doctrines by their tendency thereto ; but what is of that nature, or what is an hindrance to it, many are not yet agreed about. The Socinians contend, That the doctrine of the satisfaction of Christ overthrows the necessity of a holy life. The Papists say the same concerning the imputation of Christ’s righteousness. The same charge is laid by others against the doctrine of election, the efficacy of divine grace in the conversion of sinners, and the faithfulness of God in the preservation of believers in their state of grace to the end. On the other hand, the Scripture places the foundation of all true holiness in these things ; so that without the faith and influence of them, it will not allow any thing to be so called.

First then, The nature of God as revealed to us, with our dependence on him, the obligation that is upon us to live to him, with the nature of our blessedness in the enjoyment of him, indispensably require that we should be holy. The holiness of God’s nature is everywhere in Scripture made the fundamental reason of the necessity of holiness in us. “Be ye holy, for I am holy ;”—

and to shew the everlasting equity and force of ~~this~~ reason, it is transferred to the gospel ;” as he which called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation ; because it is written, “ Be ye holy, for I am holy.” Levit. xi. 44, and 1 Pet. i. 15, 16. God lets them know that his nature is such, that unless they are holy, there can be no such intercourse between him and them : “ I brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God ; ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.” Lev. xi. 15. Without this, the relation designed cannot be maintained. To this purpose is that description given us of his nature : “ For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight ; thou hatest all workers of iniquity. Thou shalt destroy them that speak lying ; the Lord will abhor the bloody and deceitful man.” Psal. v. 4—6. Answerable to that of the prophet,—“ Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity.” He is such a God, so pure, so holy, that he can take no pleasure in fools, liars, or workers of iniquity ; and our apostle argues in the same manner : “ Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear ; for our God is a consuming fire.” He lays his argument for the necessity of holiness in the worship of God, in the consideration of the holiness of his nature, which, as a consuming fire, will devour what is inconsistent with it. Hence God strictly required that nothing unclean or unholy should be in the camp of his people, because of his presence among them, who is himself holy ; and without an exact observance hereof, he declares that he will depart and leave them. He who resolves not to be holy, had best seek another God to worship ; with our God he will never find acceptance ; and therefore the Heathen, who gave themselves up to all filthiness, fancied such gods as were wicked and unclean, that they might freely conform to them, and serve them with satisfaction ; and God himself declares that men of wicked and flagitious lives, have secret thoughts that he is not holy,

but like themselves; for if they had not, they must think either of leaving him or their sins. Ps. l. 21.

But we must carefully observe, that the holiness of God as absolutely considered, merely as an eternal property of the divine nature, is not the immediate ground of and motive to holiness, but it is the holiness of God as manifested to us in Christ Jesus. Under the first consideration, we who are sinners, can make no conclusion from it but that of Joshua. "He is a holy God, a jealous God; he will not forgive your iniquities." No argument can be rationally pleaded for the necessity of holiness, unless it contain in itself an encouraging motive to it. To declare it necessary, and at the same time impossible, is not to promote its interest. No creature is capable of such a perfection in holiness, as absolutely to answer the infinite purity of the divine nature, without a covenant condescension; but it is the holiness of God, as he is in Christ, and as in Christ represented to us, that gives us both the necessity and motive to holiness. In him the glorious perfections of God appear more resplendent and attractive than as absolutely considered. "The light of the knowledge of the glory of God" is given to us, "in the face of Jesus Christ;" that is, clear manifestations of his glorious excellencies, which are not only directive to holiness, but also effective of it. Particularly, the fiery holiness of God is so represented to us in Christ, that, though it lose nothing of declaring the indispensable necessity of holiness in all that draws nigh to him, yet it is so tempered with grace and condescension, as may encourage us to endeavour after a conformity to it.

Together with a representation of the holiness of God in Christ, there is a revelation made of what holiness in us he requires and will accept. Absolutely considered, he neither requires nor admits of any but what is absolutely perfect; and where there is any failing, the whole is condemned, James ii. 11. This, therefore, can only perplex the soul of a sinner;—but now, as God is in Christ, through his mediation, he accepts

of such an holiness as we are capable of, and which no man is discouraged from endeavouring to attain.

There is also, in and by Christ, a spiritual power of grace administered, which shall work this holiness in us. From this fountain, therefore, we draw not only the reasons of the necessity of holiness, but also prevalent motives to it.

We may consider in what particular instances the force of this argument is conveyed to us, or what are the special reasons why we ought to be holy because God is so : and they are three.

1. Because herein consists all that conformity to God which is our privilege and honour. We were originally created in the image of God : herein consisted the blessedness of our first state. This we lost by the entrance of sin ; and if there be not a way for us to acquire it again, we shall always come short of the glory of God, and the end of our creation. Now this is done in and by holiness alone. It is therefore to no purpose for any man to expect an interest in God, or any thing that will prove eternally to his advantage, who does not endeavour after conformity to him : for such a man despises all the glory that God designed to himself in our creation.

2. The force of the argument arises from the respect it bears to our actual intercourse with God. This we are called to, and must aim at in all our duties. If there be not in them a real intercourse with God, they are but "uncertain beatings of the air." Now, as God is holy, if we are not in our measure holy too, this cannot be. For God neither accepts of any duties from unholy persons, nor is he glorified by them ; and, therefore, as to these ends, he expressly rejects them. It is a good duty to "preach the word ;" but, to the wicked, God saith, "What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, seeing thou hatest instruction, and casteth my words behind thee,"—seeing thou art unholy ? To pray is a good duty ; but to them that are unclean, God saith, "When ye spread forth your hands I will hide mine eyes from you ; and when ye make many prayers, I will not hear ;" and the like may be said of

all other duties ; if we are not holy, they are everlastingly lost, as to their proper ends ; for there is no communion between light and darkness. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all : and if we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness," as all unholy persons do, "we lie, and do not speak truth:—but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another ; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." Now, who that considers this, unless he be infatuated, would, for the love of any one sin, or out of conformity to the world, utterly forfeit the benefit of all those duties in which, perhaps, he has abundantly laboured !

3. It arises from a respect to our future enjoyment of God. This is our utmost end, which, if we come short of, better ten thousand times we had never been ; for, without it, everlasting misery is unavoidable. Now, "without holiness no man shall see the Lord : " only "the pure in heart shall see God : " hereby alone are we made "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." There is no imagination wherewith mankind is besotted more foolish ; none so pernicious as this, that persons not sanctified, not made holy in this life, should afterwards be taken into that state of blessedness which consists in the enjoyment of God. No thought can be more reproachful to his glory, nor more inconsistent with the nature of things :—for neither can such persons enjoy him, nor would God himself be a reward to them. They can have nothing whereby they should adhere to him as their chief good ; nor can they see any thing in him that should give them rest and satisfaction. All unholy persons, therefore, who feed themselves with hopes of Heaven, do it merely on false notions of God and happiness, whereby they deceive themselves. Heaven is a place where, as they would not be, so they cannot be ; it is neither desired by them, nor fit for them. There is, therefore, a manifold necessity of holiness, from the consideration of the holy nature of that God whom we hope to enjoy.

Hence we may learn what an effectual means for the

prejudice of true holiness they have invented, who build it on no other bottom, nor press it on any other motive, but that it is meritorious in the sight of God ;— for whether this be believed and complied with or not, true holiness is ruined, if no better reason be substituted in its room. Reject this motive, and there is no need of it ; which, I am persuaded, is the case with many, who, being taught that good works are not meritorious, have concluded that they are useless. Comply with this motive, and you destroy the very nature of true holiness, and turn all the pretended duties of it into fruits of spiritual pride and blind superstition ; but we see that the necessity of it has other foundations, consistent with the grace of the Gospel.—There is no motive to it of any real efficacy, but perfectly agrees with the whole doctrine of the free grace of God by Jesus Christ ; nor is there any that gives the least countenance to merit in ourselves, or that takes us from an absolute dependence on Christ alone for life and salvation. Yet they are such as render it as necessary for us to be holy as to be justified. He who thinks to please and enjoy God without holiness, makes him an unholy God, putting the highest indignity imaginable upon him. God deliver poor sinners from this deceit ! There is no remedy ; you must leave your sins, or your God.

Hence also we evince the folly and falsehood of those clamorous accusations, wherein the most important truths of the Gospel are charged as inconsistent with, and as repugnant to holiness. The doctrine of Christ's satisfaction, say the Socinians, ruins all endeavours after an holy life : for when men believe that Christ has satisfied the justice of God for their sins, they will be careless about them, yea, live in them :—but as this supposition transforms believers into monsters of ingratitude and folly, so it is built on this foundation, that if Christ take away the guilt of sin, there is no reason in the nature of things, nor in the Scripture, why we should be holy, or keep ourselves from the power and filth of sin, or glorify God in the world ; which is an inference weak, false, and ridiculous. The

Papists and others lay the same charge against the doctrine of justification through the imputation of the righteousness of Christ; and as it is wonderful to consider with what virulent railing this charge is managed by the Papists, so with what scorn and scoffing, with what stories and tales, some among ourselves endeavour to expose this sacred truth to contempt, as though all who believe it must consequently be negligent of holiness and good works. Now although I deny not that such men may find a great strength of connexion between these things in their own minds, seeing there is a principle in the corrupt heart of man to "turn the grace of God into lasciviousness," yet this sacred truth is both doctrinally and practically the great constraining principle to holiness and fruitfulness in obedience, as shall in due time be proved; for the present, I shall only say that these objectors are wholly mistaken as to our apprehensions concerning the God whom we serve. God in Christ, whom we worship, hath so revealed his own holiness to us, and what is necessary for us on account thereof, as that we know it to be a foolish, wicked, and blasphemous thing for any one to think to please him, or come to the enjoyment of him, without that holiness which he requireth, and from his own nature cannot but require. That the grace or mercy, or love of this God, who is our God, should encourage those who truly know him to sin, or countenance them in a neglect of holy obedience to him, is a monstrous imagination.

Moreover, from what has been said, we may all blame ourselves for our sloth and negligence in this matter. It is to be feared that we have none of us endeavoured, as we ought, to grow up into this image and likeness of God. Why are we so negligent in the pursuit of our principal interest and happiness? Why do we suffer every thing, why do we suffer any thing, to divert our minds from this design? Wherefore, that I may contribute something to the awakening of our diligence herein, I shall add a few motives and directions, that herein we may be found "perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord."

First, In our likeness to God consists the excellency and pre-eminence of our nature, above that of all other creatures in the world, and of our persons above those of other men, who are not partakers of his image. With reference to other things, this is the highest excellence that a created nature is capable of. Other things had external impressions of his greatness and goodness upon them; man alone, in this lower world, was capable of the image of God in him. By the loss of the image of God, our nature lost its pre-eminence; and we are reduced into order among "perishing beasts;"—for, notwithstanding some feeble relics of this image are yet abiding with us, we have really with respect to our proper end, more of the bestial nature in us than of the divine. Wherefore, the restoration of this image, by the grace of Jesus Christ, is the recovery of that pre-eminence of our nature which we had foolishly lost. God having exalted our nature by union with himself, in the person of his Son, requires of us to preserve its dignity.

Again: This is that which gives pre-eminence to the persons of some above others: "The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour." It is seldom so on account of civil wisdom, wealth, or power; nothing can establish this general rule but likeness to God. Hence such persons are called the "Saints in the Earth, and the Excellent,"—the more holy, the more honourable. Wicked men are said to be vile; and the righteous are said to be "precious and valuable;" and hence it is that there has often been an awe on the spirits of outrageous sinners, from the appearances of God in holy persons. Wicked men, exasperated by their secular interests, prejudices, and lusts, may revile and persecute them; but secretly in their hearts they have an awe from the likeness of God in them; whence they will sometimes dread them, sometimes flatter them, and sometimes wish they "were not," even as they deal with God himself. Why then do we weary ourselves about other things? "Why do we spend our labour in vain, and our strength for that which is not

bread?" Such, all endeavours after any other excellency will at length appear.

Secondly, According to our growth and improvement in this likeness to God, are our approaches towards glory. We are drawing every day towards our natural end; and if we do not also draw nearer to our supernatural end in glory, we are most miserable. Now, men do but deceive themselves, if they suppose that they are approaching towards glory in time, if they are not making nearer to it in grace. It is some representation of future glory, that therein we shall be *like, or equal to the angels*: but that respects one particular only of that state: it is a far more excellent description of it, that we shall be "*like God*: when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is;" and it is the highest folly for any to think that they shall love that hereafter which now they hate: that *that* will be their glory which they now abhor; but this will be our glory:—"To behold the face of God in righteousness, and to be satisfied with his likeness." How then shall we make approaches towards this glory spiritually, which may answer the approaches we make to our end naturally? We have no other way but growing in that likeness of God in holiness. Hereby alone are we "*transformed into his image, from glory to glory*:"—from one glorious degree of grace to another, till one great change shall issue all grace and holiness in eternal glory: and in our desires for Heaven, we consider not so much our freedom from trouble as from sin; nor is our aim, in the first place, so much at complete happiness as perfect holiness. As, therefore, we would continually tend towards our rest,—as we would have assured pledges and foretastes of it in our own souls, this is the design which we ought to pursue. Our duty is, to be always "*perfecting holiness, in the fear of the Lord*." This duly pursued, is continually transforming the soul into the likeness of God.

Thirdly. It is only from our conformity to God that we can be truly useful in the world. God is good, and doth good; he is the great Preserver and Bene-

factor of the whole creation. They who are like God, and they only, are useful in the world. There may indeed be much useful good done by others, on various convictions, and for various ends; but there is one flaw or other in all they do. Either superstition, or vainglory, or selfishness, or merit, gets into all the good that is done by unholy persons, and brings "death into the pot;" so that though it may be of some use to individual persons, it is of none to the general good of the whole. He only who bears the likeness of God, is truly useful, represents God in what he doth, and spoils it not by false ends of his own. If, therefore, we would keep up the pre-eminence of our nature and persons,—if we would make daily secessions towards glory and blessedness,—if we would be of any real use in the world, our great endeavour ought to be, to grow up more and more into this likeness of God, which consists in our holiness.

It may be asked, What must we do, that we may grow up more and more into this likeness to God? I answer, That there are some graces of holiness that are effectually assimilating, and others that are declarative, or expressive of this likeness.

Those of the first sort, are faith and Love. Faith is a part of our holiness, as it is a grace of the sanctifying Spirit; and it is a principle of our holiness, as it purifies the heart. The glorious perfections of God shine forth in the face of Jesus Christ, and by faith we behold them;—and the effect is, "We are changed into the same image." This is the great mystery of growing in holiness.

Love has the same tendency and efficacy. He who would be like God, must love him; and he who loves God sincerely, will be like him. Every approach to God by ardent love and delight, is transfiguring; and it exerts itself by contemplation,—admiration,—and delight in obedience.

Love works by contemplation. It is in the nature of it to be meditating on the excellencies of God in Christ; yea, this is the life of it. A heart filled with the love of God, will, night and day, be exercised in

thoughts of his glorious excellencies, rejoicing in them. "Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness." And love will do the same, as to all his other perfections. This will promote our likeness to him; our minds will be changed into the image of what we contemplate, and we shall endeavour, that our lives may be conformed thereto.

Love works by admiration also. That is the voice of Love, "How great is his goodness!—how great is his beauty!" The soul, ravished, as it were, with a view of the glorious excellencies of God in Christ, has no way to express its affections but by admiration; and this beauty of God is that sweetness and holy symmetry of glory (if I may be allowed to speak so improperly) in all the perfections of God, being all in a sweet correspondency exalted in Christ, which is the proper object of our love. To see infinite holiness, purity, and righteousness, with infinite love, goodness, and mercy, all equally glorified in and towards the same things and persons, one glimpse whereof is not to be attained in the world without Christ,—is that beauty of God which attracts the love of a believing soul, and fills it with holy admiration; and this is a most effectual furtherance of our conformity unto him.

Love gives delight in obedience. The instance of Jacob is well known; his seven years service seemed short, and therefore easy to him, for the love he bare to Rachel. He did that with delight, which afterwards he would not undergo for the greatest wages;—but we have a greater instance:—Our Lord Jesus Christ says, concerning all the obedience required of him, "Thy law, O God, is in my heart; I delight to do thy will;"—and yet we know how terrible to nature were the things he did and suffered, in obedience to that law: but his unspeakable love to God and men, rendered it all his delight. Hence follows intention and frequency in all the duties of it; and where these are, holiness will thrive; and consequently we shall do so in our conformity to God.

Again: These are graces which are declarative of

this assimilation, or which evidence our likeness to God. The first of these is goodness, kindness, love; with readiness to do good, to forgive, and this towards all men, on all occasions: and this is to be considered as opposed to anger, envy, malice, revenge, selfishness; all which are directly opposite to the grace of holiness; and this, I fear, is not considered as it ought to be; for it is too common for men to plead highly for the imitation of God, and, in almost all they do, give a full representation of the Devil. Would we then be like our heavenly Father, would we represent him to the world, it must be by this frame of spirit, and suitable actings. Much of our holiness consists herein. Many distempered passions must be subdued; strong inclinations to comply with provocations must be corrected; many duties be constantly attended to, and sundry graces kept up to their exercise. The whole drove of temptations, all whose force consists in a pretence of care for self, must be resisted. When men live to themselves, and are satisfied because they do no harm, though they do no good;—are secure, selfish, angry, peevish; confine their kindness to their relations;—do little good but what they are pressed to;—esteem all lost that is done for the relief of others; and think it wise to be cautious, and disbelieve the necessities of man: in a word, that make SELF the end of their lives;—whatever their profession be, they very little represent or glorify God in the world: but, on the contrary, a man whose nature is rectified by grace;—thence useful, helpful, free from guile, envy, and selfishness,—is the best representation we can have of God on earth.

This frame of heart is peculiarly requisite with respect to the saints. Even God himself exercises his kindness in a peculiar manner towards them. “He is the Saviour of all men, especially of them that believe.” We are also commanded to “do good to all men, but especially to them who are of the household of faith.” We are to be conformed to God, not only as he is the God of Nature, but as he is our heavenly Father, and is good, in a special manner, to the whole

family of his children. I confess, when I see men apt to retain a sense of old differences, ready to receive impressions of new ones, incredulous of the sincerity of others who profess a readiness for love and peace, apt to take every thing in the worst sense, morose and severe towards this or that sort of believers, I cannot but look upon it as a very great stain to their profession, whatever else it be.

Truth is another grace of the same nature; I mean, truth and sincerity in words. This is an effect of the renovation of the image of God, and a representation of him to the world. No duty is more frequently pressed upon us: "Put away false speaking; lie not to one another; speak the truth in love:"—and the consideration hereof is very necessary to all persons engaged in trade; and that both because of the disreputation cast thereon by the evil practices of many,—and because failures in truth are apt to insinuate themselves a thousand ways, when tradesmen are not aware. "It is naught, it is naught," saith the buyer; but when he goeth away he boasteth: and, "it is good, it is good," saith the seller; but when he hath sold it, he boasteth of the advantage he hath made by his words. These things have the image of Satan upon them, and are most opposite to the God of truth. I must say, that where truth is not universally observed, according to the utmost watchfulness of sincerity and love, there all other marks of the image of God are not only sullied, but defaced; and the representation of Satan is most prevalent; and these things I could not but add, as naturally consequential to that first principal argument for the necessity of holiness, which we have proposed.

CHAPTER II.

Our Eternal Election, a Cause of and Motive to Holiness.

It is the eternal and immutable purpose of God that all whom he designs to bring to glory, shall previously

thereto be made holy. This purpose he has declared to us, that we may take no wrong measures of our condition, nor build our hopes on sandy foundations. Whatever else we are, in profession, moral honesty, or reputation in the Church, if we are not personally, spiritually, evangelically holy, we have no interest in that decree of God, whereby any persons are designed to salvation and glory; and this we shall briefly confirm. "He hath chosen us in Christ, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and unblameable before him in love." Eph. i. 4. God intends as his end in the decree of election, our eternal salvation; and he chooses us that we should be holy, as the indispensable means of attaining that end. So "God hath chosen you from the beginning unto salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit." 2 Thes. ii. 13. The force of this argument consists in these two things:—(1.) That such is the nature of God's decree, that no person can ever attain the end of glory and happiness without the means of grace and holiness. The same eternal decree respects both; he has ordained none to salvation, but through the sanctification of the Spirit. (1.) It arises from hence, that we can have no evidence of our interest in God's decree of election, without holiness. "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth who are his." 2 Tim. ii. 19. It is the decree of election which the apostle intends; and he proposes it as that alone which will give security against apostacy in a time of great temptations. How then may we know our interest in this only security against final apostacy? "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity." There is no other way to come to an evidence thereof, but by a departure from all iniquity, by universal holiness. So we are directed to give "all diligence to make our calling and election sure." It is eternally sure in itself: but it is our duty to make it sure to ourselves; and this is to be done only by finding in ourselves, and duly exercising, that train of Gospel graces and duties which the apostle enumerates. 2 Pet. 5—10.

Some persons apprehend that these things are quite otherwise; for they say, that a supposition of God's decree of personal election is a discouragement to holiness; and, under this pretence, the doctrine is evil spoken of. "For," say they, "if God from eternity has chosen men to salvation, why need they be holy? They may live securely in their sins, and be sure not to fail of Heaven at last; for God's decree cannot be frustrated; and if men be not elected, whatever they attempt in the ways of holy obedience, will be utterly lost; for eternally saved they cannot, they shall not be."

Now this objection must be removed, if not for the sake of those who make it as a cavil against the truth, yet of those who may feel the force of it as a temptation. I answer, then, that "This persuasion is not of him that calleth us;"—this way of arguing is not learned from the Scripture, for that fully declares the doctrine of God's electing love—proposes it as the fountain of all holiness, and makes it a great motive thereto. Is it not safer then for us to adhere to the plain testimonies of Scripture, confirmed by the experience of believers in general, than hearken to such proud and perverse cavils as would possess our minds with a dislike of God and his ways?

Besides, we are not only obliged to believe all divine revelations, but also in the order and method in which they are proposed to us. Observe then, (1.) The decree of election absolutely considered, or without respect to its effects, is no part of God's revealed will; that is, it is not revealed that this or that man is, or is not, elected: This, therefore, can be neither argument nor objection about any thing in which faith and obedience are concerned; for we know it not, we cannot know it, it is our sin to inquire into it. It may seem to some, like the tree of knowledge to Eve,—good for food, pleasant to the eyes, and much to be desired to make one wise, as all forbidden things seem to carnal minds; but men gather no fruit from it but death. Whatever exceptions, therefore, are laid against this decree, as it is in itself,—whatever inferences are made on supposition of this or that man's being or not

being elected, they are all unjust and unreasonable : yea, contending with God, who has appointed another way for the discovery hereof, as we shall see afterwards.

(2.) God sends the Gospel to men in pursuance of his decree of election, and in order to its effectual accomplishment : wherefore, in the preaching of it, our apostle affirms, that “he endured all things for the elect’s sake, that they might obtain the salvation which is in Jesus Christ, with eternal glory.” 2 Tim. ii. 10. So God beforehand commanded him to stay and preach at Corinth, because “he had much people in that city ;” namely, in his purpose of grace.

(3.) Wherever the Gospel comes, it proposes salvation by Jesus Christ to all who shall believe, repent, and yield obedience to him. It plainly declares to men their duty, and as plainly proposes their reward. In this state of things, no man, without the highest pride and unbelief, can oppose the secret decree of God to his known duty, and say,—“I will neither repent, nor believe, nor obey, till I know whether I am elected or not ; for all will depend upon that at last.” If this be a man’s resolution, he may go about his other occasions ; the Gospel has nothing to say or to offer to him.

(4.) The only way of God’s appointment, whereby we may come to know our election, is by the fruits of it in our own souls : nor is it lawful for us to inquire into it any other way. The obligation which the Gospel puts upon us to believe any thing, respects the order of the things themselves to be believed, and the order of our obedience ; for instance, when it is declared “that Christ died for sinners,” no man is immediately obliged to believe that Christ died for him in particular, but only that he died to save sinners, to procure a way of salvation for them,—among whom he finds himself to be. Hereon the Gospel requires of men faith and obedience : this they are obliged to comply with ; and till this be done, no man is obliged to believe that Christ died for him in particular. So it is in this matter of election : a man is obliged to believe the doctrine of it, because it is plainly revealed ; but as for

his own personal election, he cannot believe it any otherwise than as God reveals it by its effects; nor can a man justly question or disbelieve his own election till he be in such a condition wherein it is impossible that the effects of election should ever be wrought in him (if such a condition there be in the world.) For as a man, while he is unholy, can have no evidence that he is elected,—so he can have none that he is not elected, while it is possible that ever he may be holy. Wherefore, all the strength of this objection lies in the pride of mens' minds, refusing to submit to the order of God in the dispensation of his grace, and his prescription of their duty: and there we must leave it.

To return. The doctrine of *Election* is every where in the Scripture proposed for the encouragement and consolation of believers, and to further them in their course of obedience and holiness. Eph. i. 3—10; Rom. viii. 28, &c.

1. The sovereign and adorable grace and love of God herein, is a most powerful motive to holiness; for we have no way to express our thankfulness for it, but by our holy obedience. Let us, therefore, inquire what obligation this puts upon us, that God from all eternity, out of his mere sovereign grace, should first choose us to life and salvation by Jesus Christ, decreeing immutably to save us out of the perishing multitude of mankind, from whom we could not make ourselves in the least to differ? What impression does this make on our souls? What conclusion do we educe as to our practice? "Why," saith one, "If God has thus chosen me, I may then live in sin as I please: all will be well in the end; which is all I need care for;" but this is the language of a Devil, and not of a man. Suggestions like this may possibly be injected into a believer's mind (as what may not be so?)—but he that shall embrace, and act practically according to this inference, is such a monster of impiety as Hell itself cannot parallel! I shall use some boldness in this matter. He who is not sensible that an apprehension of God's electing love as a natural and powerful influence upon the souls of believers to the love of God and holy

obedience, is utterly unacquainted with the whole nature and actings of faith. Is it possible to suppose that believers can be such stupid and ungrateful monsters, so devoid of holy ingenuity and filial affections towards God, as merely out of despite to him, to cast poison into the spring of all their own mercies? Many have I known complain, that they could not attain a comfortable persuasion of their own election; never any who, when they had received it in a due way and manner, that it proved a snare to them, that it tended to ingenerate in them looseness of life, unholiness, or contempt of God.

Besides, in the Scripture it is always proposed for other ends; and God himself makes use of it as his principal argument to stir up the people to holy obedience, Deut. vii. 6, &c.—and a supposition hereof lies at the bottom of that blessed exhortation of our apostle, “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness,” &c. Col. iii. 12. These things become the elect of God, and are required of them on account of their interest in electing love and grace. Further to confirm this truth, I shall instance in some special graces, duties, and parts of holiness, which this consideration is suited to promote.

(1.) Humility. For what were we when he thus set his heart upon us, to choose us, and to do us good for ever? Poor, lost, undone creatures, who lay perishing under the guilt of our apostacy from him. What did he see in us to move him so to choose us? Nothing but sin and misery. What did he foresee that we would do of ourselves more than others, if he wrought not in us by his effectual grace? Nothing but continue in sin and rebellion against him, and that for ever. How should the thoughts hereof keep our souls in all humility and self-abasement!

(2.) Submission to the sovereign will of God in the disposal of all our concerns. This is an eminent part of holiness, and peculiarly called for in this day. God has taken all pretences of security from the earth, by what some men feel, and others fear. Where then

shall we betake ourselves for quietness and repose? It can only be obtained in a resignation of ourselves, and all our concerns, into the sovereign pleasure of God; and what greater motive can we have thereto than this? The first act of divine sovereign pleasure concerning us was, the choosing us from all eternity to holiness and happiness. This was done when we were not, when we had no contrivances of our own;—and shall we not now put all our temporal concerns into the same hand? Can the same fountain send out sweet and bitter water? Can the same sovereign pleasure of God be the free cause of all our blessedness, and can it do that which is really evil to us? Our souls, our persons, were provided for as to grace and glory in the sovereign will of God: and what a prodigious impiety it is—not to trust all other things in the same hand, to be disposed of freely and absolutely!

(3.) Love, kindness, compassion, forbearance towards all the saints, are made indispensably necessary to us, and pressed on us from the same consideration; for, if God have chosen them from all eternity, should not we love them also? How dare we entertain unkind thoughts, or maintain animosities against any of those whom God has eternally chosen to grace and glory? Such things too often happen upon provocations, and clashing of secular interests; but they are all contrary to that influence which the consideration of God's electing love ought to have upon us. We ought to receive him whom God has received, and because God has received him; we ought to choose and love all those whom God has chosen and loved. "I endure all things," saith our apostle, not for the Jews or Gentiles; not for the weak or strong in the faith; not for those of this or that way, but "for the elect's sake,"—This should regulate our love, and powerfully excite us to all acts of kindness and forgiveness.

(4.) Contempt of the world will proceed from hence. Did God set his heart upon some from eternity? Did he choose them to be his own peculiar? Doth he design to give them the best fruits of his

love? What then will he do for them? Will he make them all Kings and Emperors? Will he make them all rich and honourable? Or, at least, will he keep them from all difficulties and trials in the world? Alas! none of these things were in the heart of God concerning them. They deserve not to be named on the same day (as we used to speak) with the least of those things which God has chosen his unto. On the contrary, he has appointed the generality of his elect to a poor and afflicted condition in this world. Wherefore, let those who are poor and despised, learn to be satisfied with their condition: had God seen it good for you to have been otherwise, he would not have passed it by when he was acting eternal love towards you; and let those who are rich, not set their hearts on uncertain riches; do but think with yourselves, that these are not the things that God had any regard unto when he chose you to grace and glory; and it will abate your cares about them, and take off your hearts from them, which is your holiness.

2. Electing love is a motive and encouragement to holiness, because of the enabling supplies of grace which we may thence expect by Jesus Christ. The difficulties we meet with in a course of holiness, are great and many. Here Satan, the world, and sin, put forth their utmost strength; the best are sometimes foiled, discouraged, and ready to give over. It requires a good spiritual courage to take a prospect of the lions, serpents, and snares that lie in our way:—but it is no small encouragement that the fountain of electing grace will never fail us, but continually afford fresh supplies of spiritual strength and refreshment. Hence we may take courage to rise again when we have been foiled,—to abide when the shock of temptation is violent, and to persevere in those duties which are most wearisome to the flesh; and they are unacquainted with a course of holy obedience, who know not how needful this consideration is to a comfortable continuance therein.

3. It has the same tendency and effect in the assurance we have from thence, that notwithstanding all

the opposition we meet with, we shall not utterly and finally miscarry :—" God's election will at last obtain : " his " foundation standeth sure : " his purpose, which is " according to election, " is unchangeable ; and, therefore, the final perseverance and salvation of those concerned in it, are everlastingly secured ; and there is no greater encouragement to persist in holiness than what is administered by this assurance of a blessed end and issue of it.

Some think that this assurance tends only to carelessness ; and that to be always in fear and uncertainty is the only means to make us watchful unto holiness. It is true, were there no difference between faith and presumption, between the spirit of bondage and the spirit of adoption, there might be something in this objection :—but if the nature of faith, and of the new creature, the operations of the one and disposition of the other, are such as they are declared to be in the Gospel, men do but bewray their ignorance while they contend that the assurance of God's unchangeable love in Christ doth any way impeach, or doth not effectually promote the industry of believers in all duties of obedience.

Suppose a man on his journey, knowing himself to be in his right way, and that going on therein he shall certainly come to his journey's end, especially if he quicken his pace as occasion shall require,—will ydu say that this is enough to make such a man careless and negligent, and that it would be much more to his advantage to be lost and bewildered, not knowing whither he goes, nor whether he shall ever arrive at his journey's end ? Common experience proves the contrary ; as also, how momentary and useless are those violent fits of endeavours which proceed from uncertainty, both in things temporal and spiritual ! In general, it is that person who has a comfortable assurance of God's electing love, and thence of the blessed end of his course, who goes on constantly and evenly in the ways of holiness, quickening his pace, and doubling his speed, as he has occasion from trials and opportunities.

It appears from hence, that the electing love of God is a powerful constraining motive to holiness ; and that which invincibly proves the necessity of it to all who intend the eternal enjoyment of God ;—but it will be said, that if this be granted with respect to believers, yet, as to the unconverted, nothing can be so discouraging as this doctrine of election :—“ Can they make any other conclusion from it, but if they are not elected all their endeavours are vain ; if they are elected, then they are needless ? ” I answer,

(1.) We have already shewn that this doctrine is revealed in the Scripture, principally to acquaint believers with their safety, and the fountain of their comforts.—Having, therefore, proved its usefulness to them, I have discharged all that is absolutely needful to my present purpose ; but I shall, moreover, shew, that it has its proper benefit towards others also ;—for,

(2.) Suppose the doctrine of personal election be preached ; two conclusions may possibly be drawn from it :—First, That as this is a matter of great and eternal moment to our souls, and there is no way to secure our interest in it but by the possession of its fruits and effects, which are faith and holiness,—we will, we must use our utmost endeavours, by attaining them, to make our election sure. Others may conclude, that if those who shall be saved are chosen thereto before the foundation of the world, then it is to no purpose to believe or to obey, seeing all things must be as they were fore-ordained. Now, I ask, Which of these conclusions is the most rational, and most suitable to the principles of sober self-love, and care of our immortal condition ? Nothing is more certain than that the latter resolution will be infallibly destructive, if pursued : but in the other way, it is possible, at least, that a man may be found to be the object of God’s electing love, and so be saved : but why do I say it is possible ? There is nothing more certain, than that he who sincerely and diligently pursues the ways of faith and obedience (which are the fruits of election) shall obtain in the end everlasting blessedness. This, therefore, on all accounts, and towards all sorts of persons, is an invinci-

ble argument for the necessity of holiness, and a prevailing motive thereto : for it is unavoidable, that if there be such a thing as personal election, and that the fruits of it are sanctification, faith, and obedience, it is utterly impossible that, without holiness, any one should see God : the reason of which consequence is apparent to all.

CHAPTER III.

Holiness necessary, from the Commands of God.

WE have evinced the necessity of holiness from the nature and the decrees of God ; our next argument shall be taken from his commands. It is needless to produce instances of God's commands that we should be holy ; for it is the concurrent voice of the Law and Gospel.

Our enquiry must be, What force is there in this argument ? or, Whence do we conclude a necessity of holiness from the commands of God ? To this end the nature and properties of these commands must be considered ; we are to get our minds and consciences affected with them, so as to endeavour after holiness on their account ; for our holiness is obedience, and obedience respects a command ; for men to pretend to holiness from a principle within, without respect to the commands of God in his word, is to make themselves their own *God*, and to despise obedience to him who is "over all, God blessed for ever." Then are we the servants of God, the disciples of Christ, when we do what is commanded, and because it is commanded.

But to make our way more clear, we must premise, that God's commands may be considered, 1. As they belong to the Covenant of Works ;—2. As they belong to the Covenant of Grace. The same things, as to the matter of them, are required in both ; but there is a great difference in the manner and end of these commands.

For, 1. The commands of God, as under the old

covenant, so require universal holiness in us, that upon the least failure, they allow of nothing else we do, but determine us transgressors of the whole law. The end required by them is, that they may be our righteousness before God, or that we may be justified thereby. Rom. x. 4, 5.

2. It is otherwise, on both these accounts, with the commands of God under the new covenant, or in the Gospel; for, though God requires universal holiness in them, yet not in that rigorous way as by the law; so that, if we fail in any thing, all should be rejected; but he doth it with a mixture of grace and mercy; so that, if there be an universal sincerity, in a respect to all his commands, he accepts of it on account of the mediation of Christ; but yet there is no relaxation as to any duty of holiness, nor any indulgence to the least sin; the obligation to universal holiness is equal to what it was under the law, though a relief be provided, where we come short of it, in sincerity on the one hand, and mercy on the other.

The commands of the Gospel do not require holiness to the same end as the commands of the law did, namely, that thereby we may be justified; he has provided another righteousness for that end, which fully answers all that the law requires, and whereby he has exalted more than ever the honour of his own holiness and righteousness. Now, this is no other than the righteousness of Christ imputed to us; for he is "the end of the law for righteousness to them that believe." But God has appointed other ends to our holiness, and so to his command of it in the Gospel, consistent with the nature of that obedience which he will accept of us, and such as we may attain through the power of his grace.

I. The first thing to be considered in the command of God that we should be holy, is the *authority* of it. It is indispensably necessary that we should be holy, on account of the authority of God's command. Authority, wherever it is just, carries with it an obligation to obedience: take this away, and you fill the world with disorder. If the authority of parents, masters,

and magistrates, did not oblige children, servants, and subjects to obedience, the world would fall into hellish confusion. God himself makes use of this argument, to convince men of the necessity of obedience: "A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master; if I then be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear?" If, in all particular relations where there is any thing of superiority, obedience is expected and exacted,—is it not due to me, who have all authority?

There are two things which enforce the obligation,—The right of commanding, and the power of executing; both comprised in James iv. 12. "There is one Law-giver, who is able to save and to destroy." 1. He who commands us to be holy, is our Sovereign Law-giver; his command proceeds from the absolute power of a Sovereign Legislator; and where this is not complied with, the whole authority of God is despised. So God, in many places, calls sinning against his commands "despising him," and "despising of his commandment." Here, then, we found the necessity of holiness, on the command of God. This are we to carry about with us wherever we go; and whatever we do, to keep our souls under the power of it, in all our duties, and on all occasions of sin. Were this written on the hearts of men, in their ways, trades, shops, affairs, families, studies, closets,—they would have "holiness to the Lord" on their breasts and foreheads too.—2. The apostle tells us, that as God in his commands is a Sovereign Law-giver, so he "is able to kill and keep alive;" that is, his commanding authority is accompanied with a power, whereby he is able eternally to reward the obedient, and to punish the disobedient:—for, though I would not exclude other considerations, yet I think this of eternal rewards and punishments is principally intended.

Our Saviour, Matth. x. 28, mentions a killing, which is opposed to all temporal evil, and death itself. "Fear not them who can kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Hell;" and this keep-

ing alive is a deliverance from the wrath to come, in everlasting life; and this is that which gives unavoidable efficacy to the command.

The minds of men are little influenced by the rewards and punishments of human laws, for they frequently prefer their present satisfaction before them. They have also a secret apprehension, that the law-makers neither will nor can execute the penalties threatened: but things are quite otherwise with respect to the laws of God. The rewards and punishments being eternal, cannot be balanced by any consideration of this present world. Nor can there be any reserve on account of mutability, ignorance, impotence, or any other pretence that they shall not be executed. The promise of eternal blessedness on the one hand, or the threatening of misery on the other, will certainly befall us, according as we shall be found holy or unholy. God commands us to be holy; but what if we are not so? Why, as sure as God is holy and powerful, we shall eternally perish. What if we comply with the command, and become holy? On the same ground of assurance, we shall be brought to everlasting felicity.

Some, perhaps, will say, that to yield obedience to God with respect to rewards and punishments, is servile, and becomes not the free spirit of the children of God;—but this is a vain imagination. The bondage of our own spirits may make every thing we do servile: but a due respect to God's promises and threatenings is a principal part of our liberty. It is, therefore, our duty, if we would be found walking in a course of holy obedience, to keep a sense of the authority of God's command constantly fixed on our minds: and we may apply this to persons and occasions.

(1.) As to persons:—Let the great and noble especially regard this, whose special temptation it is to be lifted up to a disregard of God's authority. The prophet distributes incorrigible sinners into two sorts. The first are the poor: and it is their folly and sensual lusts that keep them from observing the command:—
“They have refused to receive correction, they have

refused to return ; therefore I said, Surely, these are poor, they are sottish, for they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God." Jer. v. 3. But there is another sort of sinners to whom the prophet applies :—"I will get me to the great men, and I will speak unto them, for they have known the way of the Lord, and the judgment of their God." Great men, by reason of their education and other advantages, attain to a knowledge of the will of God, or at least may be thought to have done so. They therefore are not likely to be obstinate in sin, merely from stupid ignorance and folly. No, saith the prophet, they take another course: "They have altogether broken the yoke, and burst the bonds." They are like a company of rude beasts, who having broken their yokes, run up and down the fields, treading down the corn, breaking up the fences, pushing with the horn, and trampling on all before them. Now this "breaking the yoke," is the despising the authority of God in the command. Seeing, therefore, that this is the special temptation of such persons, let all those who have the least sincere desire after holiness, watch diligently, to keep up a due sense of the authority of God on their minds. When you are in the height of your greatness, in the fulness of your enjoyments, in the most urgent of your avocations, remember him who is over all, and consider that you are subject to his authority equally with the poorest creature on earth.

(2.) Let us all endeavour to carry a constant regard to the authority of God in his commands, into all those occasions, places, or societies, wherein we are apt to be surprised into any sin. (1.) Carry this with you into your secret retirements and enjoyments : neglect hereof is the cause of those secret sins which the world swarms with.—When no eye sees but the eye of God, men think themselves secure. Hereby many have been surprised into folly, which has proved the beginning of a total apostacy. An awe from the authority of God in the command, will secure us equally in all places, and on all occasions.—(2.) Let us carry it into our businesses and callings. Most men are

very apt to be intent on present occasions, and, having a certain end before them, habituate themselves to the ways of its attainment ;—and, while they are so engaged, many things occur which are apt to divert them from the rule of holiness. Whenever, therefore, you enter into your occasion, wherein you may expect that temptations will arise, call to mind the greatness and authority of him who hath commanded you to be holy. (3.) Carry it with you into your companies and societies ; for many have frequent occasions of engaging in such societies, wherein the least forgetfulness of the sovereign authority of God will betray them into vanity and corrupt communication, till they hear with pleasure, and do with delight, such things whereby the Holy Spirit of God is grieved, their own consciences are defiled, and the honour of profession is cast to the ground.

II. The command of God that we should be holy, is to be considered not only as a fruit of authority which we must submit to, but as a fruit of infinite wisdom and goodness also, which it is our highest advantage to comply with:—and this introduces a peculiar necessity of holiness from the consideration of what is reasonable and ingenuous ; the contrary of which would be foolish and ungrateful, every way unbecoming rational creatures. Where nothing can be discerned in commands but mere authority, they are looked on merely as respecting the goods of those who command, and not theirs who obey ; which weakens the principle of obedience. Now, though God, because his dominion over us is sovereign, might have justly left us to no other means of obedience, yet he does not, nor ever did so : but as he proposes his law as an effect of infinite wisdom and goodness, so he pleads that all his commands are just and equal in themselves ; good and useful to us ; and that our compliance with them is our present, as well as it will be our future happiness : and that this is so, appears from all the considerations of it.

1. Look upon it formally as a law prescribed to us : and it is so because the obedience it requires is pro-

portioned to the power which we have to obey. **The** command, as we shewed before, may be considered either as it belonged to the old covenant or the new. In the first way, the strength of grace which we had originally from God under the law of creation, was sufficient to enable us to all that holy obedience which was required; and our not doing so was from wilful rebellion, and not from any impotency in us: and in the latter way, there is by virtue of the covenant of grace, a supply of spiritual strength given in by the promise, enabling believers to answer the commands of holiness. No believer fails in the performance of obedience merely for want of spiritual strength; for God "gives unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue." 2 Pet. i. 3.

It is true, that strength is administered by certain means, which, if they neglect, they will come short of it; but in the diligent use of them, none shall ever fail of that ability which shall render the commands of the gospel easy and not grievous to them. Our apostle expressly affirms, and so may we, that "he could do all things;" that is, in the way and to the end required in the gospel, "through Christ that strengthened him."

On the supply of this grace, the command becomes equal and just, meet and easy to be complied with; for none can refuse a compliance with it, but their so doing is contrary to that disposition of the new nature which God has implanted in them: so that in them to sin, is not only contrary to the law without them, but also to that which is in their own inclination and disposition, which in such cases hath a sensible violence put upon it by the power of corruptions and temptations. Wherefore, though the command for holiness seem grievous to unregenerate persons, because it is against the habitual bent and inclination of their whole souls, yet it neither is, nor can be so to them who cannot neglect it, without offering violence to the inclinations of the new creature.

Besides, actual grace for every holy act and duty,

is administered to us according to the promise of the Gospel. So God told Paul, that his "grace was sufficient for him:" and he "worketh in us to will and to do, of his own good pleasure." Now, though this actual working grace be not in the power of men's wills, but depends on the faithfulness of God, yet I must say that where it is sought by faith and prayer, it is never so restrained from any believer, but that it shall be effectual to him, unto the whole of that obedience which is required of him. How just and equal then is the command of holiness! How reasonable is it that we should comply with it, and how great is their sin and folly who neglect it! for not only the authority, but the wisdom and goodness of God in giving such a command, oblige us to holy obedience.

2. The command is equal, and so to be esteemed from the matter of it, or the things that it requires. Things they are that are neither great nor grievous, much less perverse, useless, or evil. There is nothing in the holiness which the command requires, but what is good to him in whom it is, and useful to all about him. What they are, the apostle mentions in Phil. iv. 8. They are "things true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report:" and what evil is there in any of these things, that we should decline the command that requires them? The more we abound in them, the better it will be for our relations, our families, our neighbours, the whole nation, and the world; but best of all for ourselves.

It is therefore incumbent on us, in the first place, to endeavour after holiness with respect to the command of God, and because of it. I know not what vain imaginations possess the minds of some, that they have no need of respect to the command, nor to the promises and threatenings of it, but to obey, merely from the power and guidance of an inward principle: nay, some have supposed, that a respect to the command would vitiate our obedience, rendering it legal and servile; but I hope, that darkness which hindered men from discerning the harmony there is between the principle of grace in us, and the authority of the command upon

us, is much removed from all sincere professors. **It is a respect to the command which gives the formal nature of obedience to what we do; and without a proper regard to it, there is nothing of holiness in us.** Some would make the light of nature their rule; some look no further for their measure than what carries the reputation of common honesty among men; but he who would be holy indeed, must always mind the command of God with that reverence and those affections which become him to whom God speaks immediately: and that this may be effectual, let us consider,

(1.) How God has multiplied his commands, to testify not only his infinite love and care towards us, but also our eternal concern in what he requires. He has given us not a single command, but "line upon line, precept upon precept." Almost every page of the Bible is filled with commands, or directions for holiness; and there is not the least particular duty or instance of holiness, but it falls under some special command of God. Is it not then our duty always to consider these commands, to bind them to our hearts, that nothing may separate them?

(2.) We may do well to consider what various enforcements God is pleased to give to those multiplied commands. They are accompanied with exhortations, intreaties, reasonings, expostulations, promises, threatenings, all made use of to fasten the command upon our minds and consciences. God knows how slow we are to receive due impressions from his authority; and he knows by what ways and means the principles of our internal faculties are apt to be wrought upon, and therefore applies those engines to fix the power of the command upon us. I shall instance only in those peculiar promises whereby God enforces his command for holiness.

It is not for nothing that it is said, "Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." There is in all the promises a special respect to it; and it gives them in whom it is, a special interest in all the promises. This is, as it were, the text on which our Saviour preached his sermon on the

Mount; for all the blessings he pronounced, consist in giving particular instances of holiness, annexing a special promise to each of them. "Blessed," saith he, "are the pure in heart:" heart-purity is the spring of all holiness; and why are such persons blessed?—"they shall see God:" he appropriates the promise of the eternal enjoyment of God to this qualification of purity of heart. So also it has the promises of this life, both in things temporal and spiritual. In things temporal, we may select that special instance given us by the psalmist: "Blessed is he that considereth the poor." Wisely to consider the poor in their distress, so as to relieve them according to our ability, is a great act and duty of holiness. He that doth this, saith the psalmist, is a blessed man. In what respect? "The Lord will deliver him in the time of trouble. The Lord will preserve and keep him alive, and he shall be blessed on the earth, and thou wilt not deliver him into the hand of his enemies; the Lord will strengthen him on the bed of languishing, and thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness." Many special promises in the most important concerns of this life, are given to the right discharge of this one duty; for "Godliness hath the promise of this life." It is so with respect also to spiritual things. So the apostle Peter having repeated a long chain of graces, adds for an encouragement, "If ye do these things, ye shall never fall." The promise of permanence in obedience, with preservation from all such fallings into sin as are inconsistent with the covenant of grace, is affixed to our diligence in holiness: and who knows not how the Scripture abounds in instances of this nature! We conclude therefore, that together with the command of God, we should consider the promises with which it is accompanied, as an encouragement to the cheerful performance of that obedience which the command itself makes necessary.

Wherefore, the force of this argument is obvious to all. God has positively declared his will, interposing his sovereign authority, commanding us to be holy, and that on the penalty of his utmost displeasure; and

therewith he has given us redoubled assurance, that be we else what we may, without sincere holiness, he will neither own us, nor have any thing to do with us. Be our gifts, places, usefulness, or profession, what they may, unless we are sincerely holy, we are not, we cannot, we shall not be accepted with God.

And the Holy Ghost is careful to obviate a deceit in this matter, which he foresaw would put itself on the minds of men; for whereas the foundation of our salvation, the hinge on which the whole weight of it turns, is our FAITH,—men might be apt to think that if they have faith, it will be well enough with them, although they are not holy. Therefore, because this pretence of faith is great, and apt to impose on the minds of men who would willingly retain their lusts, with a hope and expectation of Heaven, we are plainly told in the Scripture, that *that* faith which is without holiness, without works, without fruits, which can be so, or it is possible that it should be so, is vain; not that faith which will “save our souls,” but equivocally so called, that may perish for ever with those in whom it is.

CHAPTER IV.

The Necessity of Holiness, from God's sending Jesus Christ.

WE have yet other arguments to plead to the same purpose; for one principal design of God in sending his Son into the world was, to recover us to a state of holiness, which we had lost. “For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the Devil.” 1 John iii. 8.—The Son of God was manifested by his incarnation, in order to the work he had to accomplish in our nature: and this was to destroy the works of the Devil, the principal of which was, the infecting of our nature with a principle of sin and enmity against God; and this is not done away but by the introduction of a principle of holiness. Unless this be done, there is no new creation, no restora-

tion of all things, no one end of the mediation of Christ fully answered:—but we shall consider this matter a little more distinctly.

The exercise of the mediation of Christ is confined to his threefold office. Whatever he does for the Church, he does it as a priest, or as a king, or as a prophet; and we may consider how each of these offices has an influence unto holiness, and makes it necessary unto us.

First, the priestly office of Christ. The proper acts of this office, which are oblation and intercession, immediately respect God himself; for a priest is one who is appointed to deal with God in the behalf of others; and therefore Christ does not by either of these sacerdotal acts immediately and efficiently work holiness in us: but the effects of these acts are of two sorts, immediate and mediate. (1.) Immediate, such as respect God himself; as atonement, reconciliation, satisfaction. In these consists the first and fundamental end of the mediation of Christ; without which all other things would be useless: we can neither be sanctified nor saved by him, unless sin be first expiated, and God atoned. But (2.) The mediate effects of Christ's sacerdotal acting respect us; namely, our justification and sanctification: for God effects holiness in all believers by virtue of the oblation and intercession of Jesus Christ.

“He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” His “giving himself for us,” is the common expression of his offering himself as a sacrifice to God; and this he did, not only that he might redeem us from iniquity, from the guilt and punishment of our sins, but also that he might purify us to himself, sanctify us, or make us holy, and fruitful, or zealous of good works. His blood, purgeth our consciences from dead works, to serve the living God.” “There is a “purging of sin,” which consists in the legal expiation of it; but this is by real efficiency in our sanctification. So where Christ is said to “wash us from our sins in his own blood,”

namely, as shed for us, it is not only the **expiation** of guilt, but the purification of filth that is intended : and as holiness is one special end for which he gave himself for us, without a participation thereof, it is **impossible** that we should have the least evidence of an **interest** in his oblation as to any other end of it.

The intercession of Christ, which is his **second** sacerdotal act, hath also the same end, and is **effectual** to the same purpose. It is true, he intercedes **with God** for the pardon of sin by virtue of his oblation ; but this is not the whole design of it ; he intercedes **also** for grace and supplies of the Spirit, that we may be **made** and kept holy. John xvii. 15, 17.

Secondly,—As to the prophetical office of Christ ; and there are two parts of it,—the revelation of **God** in his name, love, grace, goodness, and truth in his promises, that we may believe in him ; and the revelation of God in his will and commands, that we may obey him ;—and this may be considered two ways, 1. As he was peculiarly sent to the house of Israel : 2. With respect to the whole Church in all ages.

The first, which engaged much of his personal ministry, consisted in the declaration, exposition, and vindication of the divine precepts which had been given before ; but which, through the carnality of the people to whom they were given, were but obscurely apprehended. He declared the spirituality of the law, with respect to the most secret frames of our hearts, and the least disorder and irregularity of our passions and affections. He declared the true sense of its commands, vindicating them from the false glosses which then passed current in the Church. Thus he restored the law to its pristine crown, as the Jews have a tradition that it should be done in the days of the Messiah.

The second part of this office, with respect to the Church in all ages (including the ministry of the apostles as inspired by him) consisted in the revelation of those duties of holiness which, though they had a general foundation in the law, could never have been known in their special nature but by his teaching. Hence are they called **Old and New Commandments**

in distinct sense. Such are faith in God through him, brotherly love, self-denial in taking up the cross, doing good for evil, and the like. Besides, he teacheth us all those ordinances of worship which belong to our holiness, and whereby it is promoted.

There are three things considerable in the doctrine of obedience that Christ teacheth. 1. It is complete and perfect. It reaches the heart itself with all its most secret actings. The practice of most men goes no further than outward acts; but he, in the first place, requires the renovation of our whole souls in the image of God. It is a notable effect of the atheistical pride of men, that they betake themselves to other directions rather than to those of the Gospel. Some go to the light of nature and the use of right reason (that is, their own) as their guide; and some add the documents of the philosophers. They think a saying of Epictetus, or Seneca, or Arrianus (being wittily suited to their fancies) to have more life and power in it than the precepts of Christ in the Gospel. Such a contempt have men risen to of Jesus Christ, the wisdom of God, and the great Prophet of the Church, of whom God says, "This is my beloved Son; hear him!"

Let us suppose, for the sake of our modern Heathens who would have it so, that all our obedience consists in morality; from whence shall we learn it? or to whom shall we go for teaching? Certainly, where the instruction is most plain, perfect, and free from mistakes; where the manner of teaching is most powerful and efficacious; and where the authority of the teacher is most unquestionable. In all these respects we may say of Christ, "Who teacheth like him?" Then, probably, we shall be taught of God, when we are taught by him.

The precepts which are given us by the light of nature, however improved by the reason of contemplative men, are defective; for they never reached to that in which the life of holiness consists,—the renovation of our nature. Hence it is that, by all the documents of the philosophers, the nature of no individual person was ever renewed, whatever change was made in his

conversation. Very few of the precepts of it are certain, so that we may take them for an infallible rule. Some general commands are indeed sufficiently clear, as, that God is to be loved, that others are not to be injured, that every one's right is to be rendered to him: but go a little further, and you will find all the great moralists at endless disputes about the nature of virtue, the duties of it, and the rule of their practice. In these disputes many of them consumed their lives, without any great endeavours to express their own notions in their conversations; and, from the same reason I suppose it is that our present moralists seem to care for nothing but the name;—virtue itself is become a strange and uncouth thing.

But, in what is commanded by Jesus Christ, there is no room for the least hesitation, whether it be an infallible rule to us or not. Every precept, about the meanest duty, is equally certain and declarative of the nature and necessity of that duty, as those of the greatest, and which have most evidence from the light of nature. There is no obscurity nor partiality in his precepts and directions; they are commensurate to universal obedience. I dare challenge the most learned moralists in the world, to give an instance of any one duty of morality that I will not evince to be more clearly required by Christ in the Gospel, and pressed on us by far more effectual motives than any they are acquainted with. It is, therefore, the highest folly, as well as wickedness, for men to plead or pretend the learning duties of obedience from others, rather than from Christ, the Prophet of the Church!

2. The manner of teaching, as to power and efficacy, is also considerable to this end; and concerning this also we may say, "Who teacheth like him?" There was that eminence in his personal ministry while he was on earth, that filled all men with admiration. Hence it is said, that "he taught with authority, and not as the Scribes;"—"they wondered at the gracious words which he uttered;" and the very officers that were sent to apprehend him, came away astonished, saying, "Never man spake like this man." Yet this

is not what I intend, but his continued and present teaching of the Church by his Word and Spirit. He gives that power and efficacy to it, as that by its effects every day it demonstrates itself to be from God. This the experience and lives of multitudes bear witness to continually. They do and will to eternity attest what power his word hath had to enlighten their minds, to subdue their lusts, to renew their hearts, to relieve and comfort them in their temptations and distresses, with the like effects of grace and power.

What is the manner of teaching by the greatest moralist, and what are the effects of it? Enticing words, elegance of speech, composed into snares for the affections and delight to the fancy, are the ornament and life of that kind of teaching; and hereof evanid satisfaction, temporary resolutions, and a few feeble endeavours after some change of life, are its best effects; and so gentle is its operation on the minds of men, that even the most profligate of sinners are delighted with it, as they are with the preaching of those who act in the same spirit, and from the same principles.

3. Whereas the last thing considerable in those whose instructions we should choose to give up ourselves unto, is their authority; that must be left without further plea to the consciences of all men, whether they have the highest esteem of the authority of Christ the Son of God, or of those others whom they admire; and let them freely take their choice, so they will but ingenuously acknowledge what they do.

Thirdly,—This is one great end of the kingly power of Christ; for, as such, he subdues our enemies, and preserves our souls from ruin. Those are our adversaries who fight against our spiritual condition and safety,—our lusts, our sins, and our temptations. These doth our Lord Christ subdue by his kingly power, quickening and strengthening in us, by his supplies of grace, the principles of holy obedience. In brief, the work of Christ as a king may be reduced to these heads:—To make his subjects free:—To preserve them in safety, delivering their souls from deceit and violence:—In giving them prosperity, and increasing

their wealth:—In establishing assured peace for them : —In giving them love among themselves :—In placing the interest and welfare of his kingdom in all their affections :—In eternally rewarding their obedience. All these he doth, principally, by working grace and holiness in them, as might be easily demonstrated. I suppose none question that the principal work of Christ towards us as our Head and King, is in making and preserving us holy. I shall not, therefore, further insist upon it. It remains that we improve these considerations, to the confirmation of our present argument concerning the necessity of holiness.

First,—It is evident from hence, how vain a thing it is for persons continuing in an unholy condition, to imagine that they have an interest in Christ, or shall have any benefit by him. This is the great deceit whereby Satan ruins the generality of mankind who profess the Christian religion. The Gospel openly declares a way of life and salvation by Jesus Christ. This is so far admitted by those who are called Christians, that they will allow of no other way in competition with it; for I speak not of profligate and hardened sinners, who disregard all future concerns, but such as in general desire to escape the damnation of Hell, and attain immortality and glory: and this they profess to do by Jesus Christ, as supposing that the things to this purpose mentioned in the Gospel, belong to them as well as to others, because they also are Christians: but they consider not that there are certain ways and means, whereby the virtue and benefit of all that Christ has done for us is conveyed to the souls of men; without which we have no concern in them. If we expect to be saved by Christ, it must be by what he hath done, and does for us, as a Priest, a Prophet, and a King: but one of the principal ends of what he does in all these, is, to make us holy; and if this be not effected in us, we can have no eternal benefit by his mediation.

Hence the miserable condition of multitudes called Christians, who live in sin, and yet hope to be saved by the Gospel, is greatly to be lamented. For, (1.)

They wofully deceive their own souls, crying, "Peace, peace, when sudden destruction lies at the door." And, (2.) They throw the greatest dishonour possible on Christ and the Gospel;—for as to the open enemies of Christ, who reject him as a seducer, and the Gospel as a fable, they are condemned already: and none can think the worse of him or of the Gospel on account of their opposition; but for those who profess to own them both, and yet continue to live in sin, they endeavour to represent Christ as "a minister of sin;" as one who has procured indulgence for men to live in their lusts; and the Gospel as such a law or rule, as that men loving sin, and living in it, may be saved by them. This is that which has reflected deep dishonour on the Christian religion, and has impeded its progress in the word. These are they of whom the apostle makes his bitter complaint, "Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things." Phil. iii. 18, 19. How many does this character suit in these days! And whatever they think of themselves, they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, and trample under their feet the "blood of the covenant."

Secondly,—Let more serious professors be most serious in this matter. The apostle having given assurance of the certain salvation of all true believers, from the immutable purpose of God, presently adds, "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity," 2 Tim. ii. 19; plainly intimating that, without holiness, without an universal departure from iniquity, we cannot have the least evidence that we are interested in that assured condition. You name the name of Christ,—profess an interest in him,—expect salvation by him;—which way will you apply yourselves to him? From which of his offices do you expect advantage?

Is it from his sacerdotal? Has his blood purged your consciences from dead works, that you should serve the living God? Are you cleansed, and sanctified, and

made holy thereby? Are you redeemed out of the world by it, and from your vain conversation therein? If you find not these effects of the blood-shedding of Christ, in vain will you expect those other of atonement and peace with God, pardon, justification, and salvation, which you look for. The Priestly office of Christ has its whole effect, where it has any effect: despisers of its fruits in holiness, shall never have the least interest in its fruits in righteousness.

Is it from his prophetic office that you expect relief? Have you learned of him "to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, to live righteously, and soberly, and godly, in this present world?" Hath he taught you to be humble, meek, patient? Hath he instructed you unto sincerity in all your dealings and conversation among men? Above all, have you learned of him to purify your hearts by faith, to subdue your spiritual and fleshly lusts, to endeavour after an universal conformity to his image? Do you find his doctrine effectual to these ends, and are your hearts cast into the mould of it? If it be so, your interest in him by his prophetic office is secured unto you:—but if you say you hear his voice in his word read and preached, you have learned many mysteries,—have attained much light and knowledge, so that you can talk of doctrines, and perform many duties,—but cannot say that the effects before mentioned are wrought in you by his Word and Spirit,—you lose the second expectation of an interest in Christ as Mediator, or any advantage thereby.

Will you betake yourself to the Kingly office of Christ? You will do well to examine how he ruleth in you and over you. Hath he subdued your lusts, those enemies of his kingdom which fight against your souls? Hath he strengthened you by his grace unto all holy obedience? And have you given up yourselves to be ruled by his Word and Spirit, to obey him in all things, and to entrust all your temporal and eternal concerns to his care, faithfulness, and power?—If it be so, you have cause to rejoice, as those who have an assured concern in the blessed things of this kingdom:—but if

your rebellious lusts still bear sway in you; if you continue to fulfil the lusts of the mind and the flesh; if you walk after the fashion of this world, and not as obedient servants of that kingdom of his, which is "not of this world,"—deceive not yourselves any longer,—Christ will be of no advantage to you!

This is the sum of our argument:—if the Lord Christ act no otherwise for our good, but in and by his blessed offices of Priest, Prophet, and King; and if the immediate effect of the grace of Christ acting in all these offices towards us, be our holiness, and sanctification,—those in whom that effect is not produced, have no reason to promise themselves an interest in Christ, or any advantage by his mediation. For men to name the "name of Christ," to avow an expectation of salvation by him:—and in the mean time to be in themselves worldly, proud, ambitious, envious, revengeful, haters of good men, covetous, living in divers lusts and pleasures,—is a scandal and shame to the Christian religion, and unavoidably destructive to their own souls.

CHAPTER V.

The Necessity of Holiness, from our Condition in this World.

ANOTHER argument for the necessity of holiness, may be taken from the consideration of ourselves, and our present state and condition; for hereby alone the vicious distempers of our mind can be cured. That our nature is universally depraved by sin, I have sufficiently proved before; and I do not now consider it with respect to the disability of living to God, nor yet as to future punishment: but it is the present misery occasioned by it, which I intend; for the mind of man being possessed with darkness, folly, and instability;—the will under the power of spiritual death stubborn and obstinate; and all the affections carnal, sensual, and selfish;—the whole soul being hurried off from

God, and so out of its way, is perpetually filled with confusion and disorder. It is not unlike that description which Job gives of the grave: "A land of darkness and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness." When Solomon set himself to search out the causes of all the vanity and vexation that is in the world, this was the sum of his discovery: "God made men upright: but they have found out many inventions;" that is, cast themselves into endless entanglements and confusions. What is sin in its guilt, is punishment in its power; yea, the greatest that men are liable to in this world. Hence God, for the guilt of some sins, penally gives men up to the power of other sins; and there is no greater misery nor slavery than to be under the power of sin. This proves the original depravity of our nature, the whole soul is filled with darkness and disorder, being brought under the power of various lusts and passions, captivating the mind and will to their interests, in the vilest drudgeries of servitude and bondage. No sooner does the mind begin to act agreeably to the small remainders of light in it, than it is immediately controlled by impetuous lusts and affections, which darken its directions, and silence its commands. Hence is the common saying not so common as what is signified by it:—

*Video meliora proboque,
Deteriora sequor*

I see good things, and I approve,—but still pursue the sins I love.

Hence the whole soul is filled with fierce contradictions and conflicts. Vanity, folly, instability, sensual appetites, inordinate desires, disquieting passions, act continually in our depraved natures. How full is the world of confusion, oppression, rapine, uncleanness, and the like dreadful miseries! Alas! they are but an imperfect representation of the evils that are in the minds of men by nature; for as they all "proceed from the heart," so the thousandth part of what is there conceived is never brought forth and acted. Wicked men are like "a troubled sea that cannot rest; whose

waves cast up mire and dirt." The heart is in continual motion, restless in its imaginations, as the waters of the sea when it is stormy; and they are all "evil, only evil continually," casting up mire and dirt. And those who seem to have the greatest advantages above others, in power and opportunity to satisfy their lusts, do but increase their own disquietude; for as these things are evil in themselves, so they are penal to those in whom they reign; and if their breasts were opened, it would appear, by the confusion and horror they live in, that they are on the very confines of Hell.

Hence is the life of man full of trouble, disappointment, vexations, and endless self-dissatisfactions; which some of the wiser heathens saw, complained of, and attempted in vain to relieve. All these things proceed from the depravity of our natures; and as, if they are not healed, they will assuredly issue in everlasting misery, so they are woful and calamitous at present. True peace and tranquillity of mind are strangers to such souls. Alas! what are the perishing profits and pleasures which this world can afford! How unable is the mind to find out rest and peace in them! They quickly satiate in their enjoyment; which only heightens present vanity, and makes provision for future vexation. We have therefore no greater concern in the world, than to inquire how this disorder may be cured. What we intend, will appear in the following observations:—

1. It is true, that some persons are naturally of a more sedate and quiet temper than others; they fall not into such excesses of outward sins as others; nay, their minds are not capable of such turbulent passions as the most are possessed with. These comparatively are peaceable, and useful to their relations and others; but yet their minds and hearts are full of darkness and disorder; for so it is with all by nature (as we have proved); and the less troublesome waves they have on the surface, the more mire and dirt frequently they have at the bottom.

3. Education, convictions, afflictions, hope of a righteousness of their own, love of reputation, associa-

tion with good men, resolutions for secular ends, with other means of the like kind, often put great restraints on the actings of the evil imaginations of men, and the course of life may be much altered by them.

3. Notwithstanding all that may be effected by these means, the disease is uncured, the soul continues still in its disorders and inward confusion ; for our original order consisted in the inclinations of our minds, wills, and affections to regular actings towards God as their end and reward. While we continue in due order towards God, it was impossible we should be otherwise in ourselves ; but being by sin^a fallen off from God, having lost our conformity to him, we fell into all the confusion and disorder before described. Wherefore,

4. The only cure of this condition is by holiness, by the renovation of the image of God in us. By this our souls are in some measure restored to their primitive rectitude ; and without this, attempts for inward peace, with due order in the affections, will in vain be attempted.—It is the holy soul, the sanctified mind alone, that is composed into an orderly tendency towards the enjoyment of God ; and hence, to all persons not in love with sin and ruin, arises a cogent argument and motive to holiness.

But it may be objected hereto, that we admit there are remainders of sinful disorder in sanctified persons ; that it occasions great conflicts, yea, that it works so powerfully as to make them captives to the law of sin : therefore it does not appear that this holiness doth so cure the sinful distempers of our minds. On the other hand, men supposed to be yet destitute of this renewing grace, seem to possess more inward peace and quiet of mind ; they complain of no inward conflict, and find that satisfaction in their lusts and pleasures by which they relieve themselves against the troubles of life.

Answer, 1. As to the peace and order pretended to be in unsanctified persons, it is like that which is in Hell and the kingdom of darkness. Satan is not divided against himself, nor is there such a disorder in his kingdom as to destroy it ; but it has a consistency

from the common end of all that is in it, which is an opposition to God and all that is good. Such peace there may be in an unsanctified mind : there being in it no active principle for God, all works one way, and all its troubled streams have the same course : there is no other peace than that by which Satan, "the strong man armed, preserves his goods, till a stronger than he comes to bind him:" and if any one think that peace and order to be sufficient for him, wherein his mind, in all its faculties, acts uniformly against God, or for sin, and the world without opposition, he may find as much in Hell when he comes there.

2. There is a difference between confusion and rebellion. Where there is confusion in a state, all government is dissolved, and every thing is let loose to the utmost disorder : but where the rule is firm, there may be rebellions that disturb some parts and places, but yet the whole state is not disordered thereby. So it is in the condition of a sanctified soul ; there may be rebellion in it, but no confusion. Grace keeps the rule in the heart, so that there is peace to the whole state of the person, though lusts and corruptions rebel against it ; but in the state of unsanctified persons, though there be no rebellion, yet there is nothing but confusion : and however men may be pleased with it for a season, yet it is nothing but perfect disorder, because it is a continual opposition to God.

3. The soul of a believer has such a satisfaction in this conflict, that its peace is not ordinarily disturbed ; and is never quite overthrown by it. Such a person knows sin to be his enemy, and knows the assistances prepared for him against its deceit ; and considering the nature and end of this contest, is satisfied with it. Yea, the greatest hardships to which sin can reduce a believer, only put him to the exercise of those graces in which he receives great spiritual satisfaction : such are humiliation, self-abasement, and abhorrence, with fervent cries for deliverance. Now, though these things may seem to be grievous, yet the graces of the Spirit being acted in them, they are so suited to the nature of the new creature, that it finds secret satisfaction in

them all ; but the troubles others meet with on account of sin, is merely from the severe reflections of their consciences, as certain presages of everlasting misery.

4. A sanctified person is secured of success in this conflict, which preserves a blessed peace and order in his soul. Suppose the conflict be with any particular lust or temptation, we are assured, that persisting in the diligent use of appointed means, we shall not fail of actual success ; and as to general success in the whole cause, namely, that sin shall not utterly deface the image of God in us, nor finally ruin our souls, we have the covenant faithfulness of God for our security. Wherefore, notwithstanding this opposition, there is peace and order preserved by the power of holiness in a sanctified soul.

But it will be further objected, that many professors, who pretend highly to holiness, are yet peevish, morose, unquiet in their minds among their relations and in the world ; yea, much outward disorder is observable in them ;—and where then is the advantage pretended, that should render holiness so indispensably necessary to us ?

Answer. If there be any such, the more shame for them ; and they must bear their own judgment : for these things are diametrically opposite to the work of holiness, and the fruits of the Spirit ; and, therefore, I say (1.) That many are esteemed holy who art not so.—Though I will judge no man in particular, yet I had rather pass this judgment on any man, that he has no grace, than that, on the other hand, grace does not change our nature and renew the image of God in us. (2.) Many who are really holy, may have the double disadvantage, first, to be under such circumstances as will frequently draw out their natural infirmities ; and then to have them heightened in the apprehension of those with whom they have to do ; which was actually the case of David all his days, and of Hannah. I would be far from giving countenance to the sinful distempers of any ; yet I doubt not that the infirmities of many are represented by envy and hatred of profession to an undeserved advantage. (3.) Wherever

there is the seed of grace and holiness, an entrance is made on the cure of all these sinful distempers ; and I am pressing the necessity of holiness, that is, of the increase of it, that this work may be carried on to perfection : and as when a wandering impostor, who pretended to judge of men's lives and manners by their physiognomy, beholding Socrates, pronounced him, from his countenance, a person of a flagitious, sensual life, the people derided him folly, who knew his sober virtuous life ; but Socrates excused him, affirming that such he had been, had he not bridled his nature by philosophy. How much more truly may it be said of multitudes, that they had been eminent in nothing but untoward distempers of mind, had not their souls been rectified by the power of grace and holiness !

I find there is no end of arguments which offer their service to the purpose in hand. I shall therefore wave many of great importance, and shut up this discourse with one that must not be omitted.

In our holiness consists the principal part of that revenue of glory and honour which the Lord Christ requires and expects from his disciples in this world. That he does require this of us is out of question, though most who are called *Christians* live as if they had no other design than to throw reproach on him and his doctrine : but if we are indeed his disciples, he hath "bought us with a price;" and we are "not our own," but his; and that "to glorify him in soul and body," because they are his. Our inquiry must be, How we may do so? and, What he requires of us to that purpose?

Now the sum of all is, that we should live holily to him, and suffer patiently for him. The first he expects at all times and in all things ; the latter, on particular occasions. Where this revenue of glory is paid him, he repents not of his purchase, nor of the invaluable price he hath paid for us ; yea, he says "The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places,—I have a goodly heritage." Now, among many others, we shall mention but one way whereby we glorify Christ ; whence also

it will appear how much we dishonour him when we come short of it.

The Lord Christ, coming into the world as Mediator, accomplished a mighty work among us; and what he did may be referred to three heads:—(1.) The Life which he led,—(2.) The Doctrine which he taught,—and (3.) The Death which he suffered. Concerning these, there ever was, and now is, a great contest. Some have openly traduced his *life* as unholy, his *doctrine* as foolish, and his *death* as justly deserved; which was the sense of the Pagan world, and the apostate church of the Jews.—Others allow them to pass with approbation, pretending to believe what is taught in the gospel concerning them; but, in fact and practice, deny any such power and efficacy as is ascribed to them, and without which they are of no value; which is the way of carnal gospellers, and all idolatrous superstitious worshippers among Christians.—In opposition hereto, the Lord Christ calls all his true disciples to glorify him, by giving their testimony to and against the world, that his life was most holy, his doctrine most heavenly and pure, his death most efficacious and precious. Now all this is no otherwise done but by obedience to him in holiness, as it is visible and fruitful.

(1.) We are obliged to profess that the life of Christ is our example. No man can take upon him the holy name of *Christian*, but the first thing he signifies thereby is, that he makes the life of Christ his pattern. How then may we yield a revenue of glory herein? How may we bear testimony to the holiness of his life against the blasphemies of the world? Can this be done otherwise than by holiness of heart and life, by conformity to God in our souls, and living to him in fruitful obedience? Can men devise a more effectual expedient to cast reproach upon him, than to live in sin, to prefer the world and present things to eternity, and yet profess that the life of Christ is their example? Is not this to bear witness with the world against him, that indeed his life was unholy? Surely, it is high time for such persons to leave the name of Christians, or

the life of sin. It is, therefore, only in conformity to him, in the holiness we are pressing after, that we can give him any glory on account of his life being our example.

(2.) We can give him no glory, unless we bear testimony to his doctrine,—that is holy and heavenly; and there is no way to do this but by holy obedience, expressing the nature, end, and usefulness of it: and indeed the holy obedience of believers is essentially distinct from any thing to which we are directed by the principles and light of Nature. It is spiritual, heavenly, filled with principles and actings of the same kind with those whereby our communion with God in everlasting glory shall be maintained. Now, though the life of evangelical holiness be hidden from the eyes of the world, in its principle and chief actings, yet there are always such apparent fruits of it as are sufficient for their conviction, that the rule of it, which is the doctrine of Christ alone, is holy, wise, and heavenly!—and multitudes, in all ages, have been won over to the obedience of the gospel by the holy, fruitful, and useful conversation of such as have expressed the power and purity of his doctrine in this manner.

(3.) The power and efficacy of the death of Christ, as for other ends, so “to purify us from all iniquity,” and to “purge our consciences from dead works, that we may serve the living God” is herein also required. The world indeed sometimes rises to that height of pride and atheism, as to despise all appearance of purity; but the truth is, if we are not “cleansed from our sins in the blood of Christ,”—if we are not thereby purified from iniquity, we are an abomination to God, and shall be objects of his wrath for ever! However, the Lord Christ requires no more of his disciples in this matter, but to profess that “his blood cleanseth them from their sins;” and evidence the truth of it by such means as the gospel has appointed to that end. If their testimony herein be not received, but be despised by the world, and so at present no apparent glory redound to him thereby, he is satisfied with it, as knowing that the day is coming wherein he will call

over these things again, when the rejection of this testimony shall be an aggravation of condemnation to the unbelieving world.

I suppose the evidence of this last argument is sufficiently plain to all. It is briefly this: Without the holiness prescribed in the gospel, we give nothing of ~~that~~ glory to Jesus Christ which he indispensably requires: and if men will be so foolish as to expect the benefits of his mediation while they refuse to give him any revenue of glory for all he has done for them,—we may bewail their folly, but cannot prevent their ruin. He “saves us freely by his grace;” but he requires that we should express a sense of it, in ascribing to him the glory that is his due: and let no man think this done by mere words: it is effected only by the power of a holy conversation, “shewing forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light.” Nay, more: if any one profess to be a disciple of Christ, to follow the example of his life, to obey his doctrine, to express the efficacy of his death, and yet continue in an unholy life, he is a false traitor to him, and gives his testimony on the side of the world against him: and indeed it is the flagitious lives of professed Christians which have brought the doctrine and person of Christ into contempt: and I advise all who read or hear these things, diligently to study the gospel, that they may thence receive an evidence of the power, truth, and glory of Christ and his ways; for he who should take the conversation of men for his guide, will scarcely be able to determine which he should choose, whether to be a Pagan, a Mahometan, or a Christian; and shall such persons, by reason of whom the name of Christ is continually dishonoured, expect advantage by him, or mercy from him? Will men yet think to live in all manner of sin, and to enjoy life and glory by Christ? Who can sufficiently bewail the dreadful effects of such a horrid insatiation! God teach us all duly to consider that all the glory and honour of Jesus Christ in the world, with respect to us, depends on our holiness, and on nothing else that we are, have, or do. If therefore we have any love to

him, any spark of gratitude for his unspeakable grace, condescension, and sufferings, with the eternal fruits of them,—any desire of his glory and honour in the world,—if we would not be found at the last day the most hateful traitors to his crown and dignity,—if we have any expectation of grace from him, or advantage by him, here or hereafter, let us labour to be “holy in all manner of conversation,” that we may hereby adorn his doctrine, express his virtues and praises, and grow up into conformity to him, who is the First-born and Image of the invisible God.



APPENDIX;

CONTAINING

EXTRACTS FROM OTHER TREATISES

WRITTEN BY DR. OWEN,

ON THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.



THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN PRAYER.



The Promise of the Holy Ghost as a Spirit of Prayer.

THE works of the Spirit of God towards believers, are either general or particular:—of the first sort are regeneration and sanctification;—of the latter are various operations, which, though included in sanctification, require a distinct consideration; such, for instance, is the aid or assistance which he gives us in our prayers and supplications; and it cannot be denied that this is more frequently and expressly asserted in the Scripture than any other operation of his whatever.

We have a special promise to this purpose: “I will pour upon the house of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and supplication.” Zech. xii. 10. A plentiful and abundant effusion of the Holy Spirit is undoubtedly intended. Those to whom he is promised, are “the house of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem;” that is, the whole Spiritual Church of God, as represented by the family of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. He is called

“the Spirit of Grace,” with respect to the sovereign cause of his dispensation, which is the mere grace of God, without any regard to our deserts ; and because he is the author, fountain, and efficient cause of all grace in us ; and because those on whom he is poured out have grace and favour with God, being “accepted in the beloved.”*

He is, as thus poured out, “a Spirit of *Supplications*,” that is, of prayer for grace and mercy ; and he is so, (1.) By working gracious inclinations in us to this duty. We are naturally wholly averse from all intercourse with God ; and there is still a secret alienation working in us from all duties of immediate communion with him : it is he alone who prepares, disposes, and inclines us to pray with delight and spiritual complacency. (2.) He is so, by giving an ability for prayer, communicating a gift to the minds of men, enabling them, profitably to themselves and others, to exercise all his graces in that special way of prayer.

We have an account of the accomplishment of this promise in Gal. iv. 6, “Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying *Abba*, Father.” The persons on whom he is bestowed are believers ; or those who by faith have obtained the privilege of adoption. He is called “the Spirit of the Son,” not only because he was in the first place given to him, and by him given to believers,—but because he enables them to behave themselves suitably to their new relation ; not as foreigners and strangers, nor as servants only, but as children and heirs of God. “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and love, and of a sound mind :” not a “spirit of bondage unto fear,” filling our minds with dread, so as to keep us at a distance from him,—but a spirit of power, strengthening us to every duty of obedience ; and a spirit of love, working in us that love to God, and delight in him, which becomes children towards their heavenly Father ; and a spirit of modest, grave, and sober mind. By the effectual working of the Holy Ghost, believers are enabled to cry “*Abba*, FATHER.” The object of prayer is “God, even the Fa-

ther." *Abba* is the Syriac or Chaldée name for Father, then in common use among the Jews; and (*pater*) Father was the same name among the Greeks or Gentiles; so that the common interest of Jews and Gentiles in this privilege may be intended; or rather, a holy boldness and intimate confidence of love is designed in the reduplication of the name:—and the Spirit assists us thus to cry, by exciting gracious affections, such as faith, love, and delight; and by enabling us to exercise those graces and affections in prayer.

* This twofold testimony concerning the promise of the Holy Ghost as a spirit of supplication, and the accomplishment of it to believers under the New Testament, sufficiently proves, that there is a peculiar work, or special gracious operation of the Holy Spirit in the prayers of God's people, enabling them thereto.—We shall now proceed to declare what is the work of the Holy Ghost in them to this end and purpose.

The Work of the Spirit as to the Matter of Prayer.

THE first thing we ascribe to the Spirit herein is, that he supplies the mind with a due comprehension of the matter of prayer, or what ought to be prayed for; without which no man can pray as he ought. The testimony of the apostle is expressed to this purpose:—"Likewise also the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groans that cannot be uttered." Rom. viii. 26.

It is true that whatever we ought to pray for, is declared in the Scripture, and summarily comprised in the Lord's Prayer; but it is one thing to have this in the book, another to have it in our heart; without which it cannot be to us the due matter of prayer. Without the assistance of the Spirit we neither know our own wants,—nor the supplies of them that are expressed in the promises of God,—nor the proper end for which we should seek those supplies.

1. The Spirit of God alone is able to give us an understanding of our WANTS.

(1.) The principal matter of our prayer has respect to faith and unbelief; the apostles prayed, "Lord increase our faith;" and the poor man in his distress, "Lord, help thou my unbelief." To this end we must be convinced by the Spirit of the nature and guilt of unbelief, and of the nature and use of faith; for neither conscience nor the law will convince us of the evil of the one, nor instruct us in the nature of the other; and without both, we know not our greatest wants, nor "what to pray for as we ought."

(2.) The matter of our prayer respects the depravity of our nature, the darkness of our understandings, the perverseness of our wills, their reluctance to spiritual things, and the secret workings of our lusts, which keep the soul from a due conformity to the holiness of God. Believers have a special regard to these things in their confessions and supplications; and their great concerns with God in prayer are for mercy in their pardon, for grace in their removal, and the daily renovation of his image in their souls. Without a sense of these matters, I must profess, I know not how any man can pray; and this knowledge we have not of ourselves. Nature is blind, and cannot see them; it is proud, and will not own them; stupid, and is insensible of them.

(3.) As it is with respect to sin, so it is with respect to God and Christ, grace, holiness, and spiritual privileges. The inward sanctification of all our faculties, with supplies of grace for this purpose, are what we want and pray for; but we have no spiritual conceptions of these things, but what are given us by the Spirit of God; and without these, what are our prayers, or what do they signify? Without these, men may say on to the world's end, without giving any glory to God, or gaining any advantage to their own souls.

(4.) With respect to temporal concerns, we know not of ourselves what to pray for. Whatever our sense may be of them, and our natural desires about them, yet how and when, under what conditions and limita-

tions, with what frame of spirit, what submission to the will of God, they are to be made the matter of our prayers, we know not: "For who knoweth what is good for man in this life, all the days of this vain life, which he spendeth as a shadow?"—In these also we need to be "taught of God."

2. The Spirit of God alone acquaints us with the grace and mercy prepared for our relief in the promises of God. What God has promised, we are to pray for, and nothing else. There is nothing that we can want, but God has promised it; and there is nothing that he has promised, which we do not want. It is, therefore, indispensably necessary that we should know what God has promised. He knows our wants infinitely better than we do ourselves; yea, we know nothing of them but what he is pleased to teach us; and from the promises we may learn them more certainly than by any other means; and this we affirm is by the Spirit of God; for the "things of God knoweth no man but by the Spirit of God:" by him alone we "know the things that are freely given unto us of God," namely, the grace, mercy, love, and kindness of the promises.

The Spirit of God alone directs believers to pray, or ask for any thing to right or proper ends. Men may lose all the benefit of their prayers by proposing to themselves improper ends, as the apostle James affirms of some: "Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, to consume it on your lusts." There is nothing so excellent in itself, so useful to us, so acceptable to God in the matter of prayer, but it may be vitiated, corrupted, and rendered vain, by an application of it to false or mistaken ends; and that in this case we are relieved by the Holy Ghost, is plain from the text under consideration; for, "helping our infirmities," and teaching us "what to pray for as we ought," he maketh intercession for us "according to the will of God," verse 27. He doth it in us, and by us; or enables us so to do. He directs and enables us to make supplications "according to the mind of God;" and herein God is said "to know the mind of the Spirit;" that

is, his end and design in the matter of his requests. This God knows ; that is, approves and accepts.

The Spirit of God directs believers not only as to the matter, but as to the end of all their requests. He guides them, therefore, to design (1.) That all the success of their petitions may have an immediate tendency to the glory of God. Without his special aid, we should aim only at self; our own profit, ease, and satisfaction.

(2.) He keeps them to this also, that the issue of all their supplications may be the improvement of holiness in them, their conformity to God, and nearer access to him. When these ends are not aimed at, the matter of prayer may be good, but our prayers themselves may be an abomination.

The Work of the Spirit as to the Manner of Prayer.

THE Holy Spirit having furnished the mind with the matter of prayer, works also a due sense and valuation of the things prayed for; for the mind may have light to discern those things, and yet the will and affections be dead unto them, or unconcerned in them. By virtue of a perishing illumination, a man may attain a gift in prayer which may edify others, and yet his own soul remain without benefit or improvement thereby; but when the Holy Spirit completes his work in us, as "a spirit of grace and supplication," he works on the will and affections to act obediently towards God in the matter of prayer: he fills believers with mourning and godly sorrow, to be exercised in their prayers as the matter may require; and this is the fountain of that inexpressible fervency and delight, of those enlarged labourings of mind which they sometimes experience under his extraordinary influences. Hence he is said to MAKE INTERCESSION for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Rom. viii. 26, 27. The word signifies *an additional interposition*, like that of an advocate for his client, pleading that in his case which he of himself is unable to do. We ourselves are said to groan (verse 23); that is, humbly, mournfully, and

earnestly to desire; and here the Spirit is said to “intercede for us with groans,” which can be nothing but his working in us such an inward labouring of heart, such a holy supernatural desire for the things prayed for, as no words can fully express. It is added, “He that searcheth the heart knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit;”—that which is thus wrought in the hearts of believers, is previous only to God the “searcher of hearts.” This is the frame we ought to aim at in all our supplications, especially in trouble and temptation, when we are usually most sensible of our own infirmities; and if we come short of this, it is from our unbelief or negligence. I acknowledge that there may be, and that there will be more earnestness and intention of mind, and of our natural spirit therein, in this duty, at one time than another, as outward occasions excite them. So our Saviour in his agony prayed more earnestly than usual; not with a higher exercise of grace, but with a greater vehemence in the working of his natural faculties. Thus it may be with us at particular seasons; but yet we are always to endeavour after the same aids of the Spirit, the same actings of grace, in every duty of this kind.

The Holy Spirit also gives the soul a filial, holy delight in God, as the object of prayer; included in that description of prayer by the apostle, namely, that it is crying *Abba, Father*:—And this comprehends,

1. A sight of God as on a throne of grace. Under this consideration he is the proper object of all our addresses. “Let us come boldly to the throne of grace.” It is an allusion to the mercy-seat upon the ark, which was a representation of Jesus Christ. God, therefore, on a “throne of grace” is God, as in readiness, through Jesus Christ, to dispense grace and mercy to suppliant sinners. Thus “the Lord waits that he may be gracious; and thus he is exalted that he may have mercy.” Without this we cannot draw nigh to him with delight, as becometh children, crying *Abba, Father*:—and it is the Spirit of God alone who thus reveals God unto us, and enables us thus to discern him.

2. A sense of God’s relation to us as a Father, is

necessary to this delight. We may use other titles and appellations of God ; but, as a Father, he is the ultimate object of all evangelical worship, of all our prayers : so it is expressed in that holy and divine description of it, given us by the apostle : "Through Christ we have access by the Spirit to the Father." Eph. ii. 18. "No tongue can express, no mind can reach the heavenly placidness and soul-satisfying sweetness which are intimated in these words. Without a due apprehension of God in this relation, no man can pray as he ought; and we can have no sense hereof but by the Holy Ghost, who "bears witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God."

3. Boldness in our approach to the throne of grace. "Having, therefore, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith." Where there is a "spirit of bondage to fear," there can be no delight in approaching to God : but this is removed by the "spirit of grace and supplication," who is also the "spirit of adoption," enabling us to cry "*Abba, Father*;" and where the "Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty;" that is, an enlarged liberty and freedom of speech in prayer—a freedom to speak all that is to be spoken—a confidence that countenances men in a freedom of speech, according to the exigence of their condition or cause. I do not say that believers always have this liberty in exercise, or equally so ; it may be impeded by temptations, spiritual indispositions, desersions, or our own negligence in stirring up the grace of God : but believers always have it in the root and principle, even all who have received the Spirit of adoption, and are ordinarily assisted in the use of it.

This liberty in prayer includes a confidence of acceptance, which is given to believers by the Holy Ghost ; and this respects not the answer of every particular request, but consists in a holy persuasion that God is well pleased with their duties, accepts their persons, and delights in their approaches to his throne. They are not terrified with apprehensions that God will say to them, "What have you to do, to take my name in your

mouths?" "Will he," saith Job, "plead against me with his great power? no; but he will put strength in me." Yea, they are assured, that the more they are with God, the better is their acceptance.

4. The Holy Spirit keeps the souls of believers intent upon Jesus Christ, as the only way and means of acceptance with God. This is the fundamental direction for prayer, under the Gospel; we are now to ask in his name, which was not done expressly under the Old Testament. By him only, we have access to the Father. We enter into the holiest through the new and living way that he has consecrated for us, and where faith is not actually exercised to this purpose, all prayer is vain and unprofitable. To enable us hereto is the work of the Holy Ghost. This is a genuine effect of his, as the "Spirit of the Son;" and hereof believers have a refreshing experience in themselves. Nor doth any thing leave a better savour or relish on their souls, than when they have had their hearts and minds kept close in the exercise of faith in Christ, the Mediator, in their prayers.

IMPROVEMENT.

If we know these things, happy are we if we do them. There are two duties incumbent on us; which may be inferred from what has been said.

1. We ought continually to glorify God for this great privilege of "the Spirit of grace and supplication;" for this is the principal means of all our intercourse with God; and without this, men wander in the dark, and know not how to deal with God. The whole work of faith is denominated from the duty of prayer; for it is said, "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved." Rom. x. 13. No heart can conceive what treasures of mercy are contained in this great privilege, of having liberty and ability to approach to God at all times. This is the relief, the weapons, and the refuge of the Church, in all conditions.

It is a matter of peculiar praise that this privilege

is bestowed in a larger measure under the Gospel than under the Law ; and he who has been under the Law and its bondage, but has now received the Spirit of adoption, knows the difference, and will be thankful. This privilege, which was of old confined to a few, is now communicated to great multitudes, even to all who "in every place, call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." In every assembly of mount Zion throughout the world, prayers and supplications are offered to God, through the effectual working of the Spirit. *Mat. i. 11* ; and in this lies all the glory of our worship ; take this away, and all is contemptible, dead, and carnal. Every family apart is enabled to pray in the Spirit. He is the same to believers all the world over, in their closets or their prisons. They have all, wherever they are, "access by one Spirit unto the Father ;" and for this enlargement of grace, God expects a revenue of glory.

2. It is our duty to make use of this gift of the Spirit. Have you an ability to pray always freely given you by the Holy Ghost, why do you not pray always in private, in families, as occasions offer ? Prayer is that singular duty, in which every grace is acted, every sin opposed, every blessing obtained ; the whole of our obedience is concerned in it, and much of our present and future blessedness depends upon it. What difficulties and discouragements rise up against it, what aversion there is in corrupted nature to it, what distractions often attend it, are well known to the people of God :—but to help us under our various infirmities ; to give us freedom and confidence in coming to the throne ; to enable us, as children, to cry *Abba*, Father, the Holy Spirit is given to us. Who then can express the sin and folly of neglecting prayer ? How does it grieve the Spirit, and injure our own souls ! Can we go from day to day in the neglect of opportunities and occasions of prayer ? How shall we answer this contempt of the Spirit's gracious aid ? Do carnal persons habitually live without prayer ? Alas ! they know not how to pray ; but for those who have received this gift of the Spirit, enabling them to pray, and making

it pleasant to the inner man,—how great an aggravation is it to their sin! I press this duty of prayer the more, because the temptations and dangers of the present day particularly call for it. If we were to talk less and pray more, things would be better than they are in the world.

It is the duty of those who have received this gift, to cherish it, to stir it up, and improve it; it is freely bestowed, but it is carefully to be preserved. It is a Gospel-talent given to be traded with, and thereby increased;—and this is to be done.

(1.) By a constant consideration and observation of ourselves, our own hearts, and our spiritual state and condition. Our state, in general, by reason of the depth and deceitfulness of our hearts, and the various changes in our frames, together with the temptations that assault us, will find us matter of examination all our days. To assist us in this, is a part of the work of the Spirit; and if we neglect our duty towards him herein, how can we expect that he should continue his aid unto us? He who prays without a due consideration of the beginnings of temptation, the deceitful actings of indwelling sin, the risings of particular corruptions, with the occasions that give them advantage, must pray at random, “fighting uncertainly, as one that beats the air;” but he who attends to this self-search and judgment, will have always in readiness the due matter of prayer, will be able to fill his mouth with arguments, and will thrive not only in the gift, but in the power and life of this duty.

(2.) Constant searching of the Scripture:—This is the glass wherein we may take the best view of ourselves, because it represents both what we are, and what we ought to be; what we are in ourselves, and what we are by the grace of God; what are our frames, actions, and ways, and what is their defect in his sight;—and a better instruction what to pray for, or how to pray, cannot be given us:—And who is there, who almost at any time reading the Scripture, with reverence of God, and subjection of conscience to him, has not had some particular matter of prayer or praise effect-

ally suggested to him ! And Christians would find no small advantage by constantly turning what they read into prayer or praise ; for hereby the instructions of the word would be more confirmed in their minds, and their hearts be more engaged in the practice of them.

(3.) Meditation on the glorious excellencies of God.—The examples of prayer which we have in the Scripture, generally begin with some expressions of the names or titles of God ; to which the remembrance of some mighty acts of his power is usually added. God has revealed his name unto us for this very purpose, that we might call upon him by the name which he owns and takes to himself. Hereby holy reverence and godly fear are excited. We are encouraged to come with boldness to the throne of grace : it is a throne of grace that God in Christ is represented to us upon : but yet it is a throne still, whereon majesty and glory reside : and God is always to be considered by us as on a throne. Hereby, also, faith and confidence are excited ; for prayer is our betaking ourselves to God as our shield, our rock, and our reward. Wherefore frequent meditation on the holy excellencies of the divine nature must needs be a most useful preparation for prayer.

(4.) Meditation on the mediation and intercession of Christ.—To this end he is proposed to us, as abiding continually in the discharge of his priestly office. Heb. iv. 15, and x. 19 ; and this is not only an encouragement to and in our supplications, but a means to increase and strengthen the grace and gift of prayer itself ; for the mind is thereby made ready to exercise itself about the effectual interposition of the Lord Christ at the throne of grace in our behalf. This has a principal place in the prayers of all believers ; and hereby we may try whether our faith be evangelical or not.

(5.) Frequency in the exercise of this gift is the way to improve it.—All habits are strengthened by exercise, and weakened by disuse. Some who had the gift of prayer in a good measure, so as to edify themselves and others, have, by a neglect of it in public and private (which is seldom without some secret or open

enormities) so lost their ability, that they cannot open their mouth on any occasion in prayer. On the other hand, frequent exercise will increase it, by virtue of God's blessing on his own appointment. This is the eternal law concerning the dispensation of evangelical gifts : "Unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance ; but from him that hath not, shall be taken away, even that which he hath." Matt. xxv. 29.

(6.) Constant fervency of mind in this duty.—Men may multiply prayers ; but if they are dull, dead, and formal in them, no spiritual advantage can be expected from them. Fervency and intention of mind quicken and enlarge the faculties, and leave vigorous impressions on them. The whole soul is cast into the mould of the matter of our prayers, and is thereby prepared for fresh engagements about them.

It is our duty, then, to use this gift of prayer unto the ends for which it is freely bestowed on us. With respect to ourselves, it is a blessed means of exciting and quickening all the graces of the Spirit, particularly faith, love, and joy. It is also appointed of God to be exercised in societies, families, church-assemblies, and occasionally for the good of any ; and the discharge of this duty is peculiarly incumbent on ministers of the Gospel and masters of families : but let us take heed that this gift be not alone : for where the gift of prayer only is exercised, without the exercise of grace in the heart, it is at best but a form of godliness, and is consistent with all sorts of secret abominations.

THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT, AS A COMFORTER.

WHEN our Saviour left this world, he was very far from laying aside his care of his disciples. He has given us the highest assurance that he continues the same care, love, and grace towards us as when he laid down his life for us :—but as there was a double work yet to be performed in our behalf, one toward God,

and the other in us, he has taken a twofold way of performing it. That toward God, he was to discharge himself, in his human nature, in Heaven; the other, of which believers are the immediate object, is committed to the Holy Spirit; and the peculiar name whereby he is distinguished in this work is, **THE PARACLETE**, which we translate the **COMFORTER**. It was with respect to the sorrows of the disciples, that he was promised under this name; and his work is still to support, cherish, relieve, and comfort the church, in all trials and distresses; and herein he manifests,

1. His infinite condescension.—He is by nature over all, God blessed for ever. It is a condescension in the divine excellency to concern itself in any creature whatever. God humbleth himself to behold the things that are done in heaven; how much more in submitting to the discharge of the office of Comforter in the behalf of poor worms on earth!

2. His unspeakable love.—The apostle prays for the presence of the Spirit with the Corinthians, under the name of the “God of love and peace;”—and the communication of the whole love of God to us is committed to the Spirit; for “the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost;”—and hence the same apostle distinctly mentions the “love of the Spirit,” joining it with all the effects of the mediation of Christ: “I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, and for the love of the Spirit.” Rom. xv. 30:—all that love which he exercises and communicates to you. It is of great use to us to consider, that there was infinite love in the susception of this office by the Spirit; and it is evident from the nature of the work itself; for the consolation of the afflicted is an immediate effect of love. There is not one drop of comfort or spiritual refreshment administered by the Holy Ghost, but what proceeds from his infinite love.

3. His almighty power.—The apostle proposes this for the support of weak believers:—“Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.” That Holy Spirit who dwells in them, is greater and more

powerful than Satan, who attempts their ruin. Who can declare the dejections, fears, and discouragements that believers are obnoxious to! nothing but Omnipotence itself is suited to obviate them. If we take a view of the condition of the Church in itself, and in the world, how weak is the faith of most believers! How great their fears! How many their discouragements! How many are the temptations, calamities, and persecutions with which they are exercised! It is evident then how necessary it was that their consolation should be entrusted with him who possesses infinite power.

Of the Inhabitation of the Spirit.

THE first thing for which the Comforter is promised to believers is, That he should dwell in them. This we ought firmly to believe, though we cannot fully conceive the manner of it. There are very many promises in the Old Testament, that God would give the Holy Spirit in and by virtue of the new covenant. We are also directed to pray for the Holy Spirit, and are assured that God will give him to them that ask of him in a due manner; and I suppose there is no petition in which believers are more earnest or frequent than this. This inhabitation is that which Christ directed his disciples to expect in the promise of him: "He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." John xiv. 17. So it is expressly affirmed of all them who are partakers of this promise, Rom. viii. 9. "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you;" (verse 11) "If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you."

This is the spring of his gracious operations in us. "The water that Christ gives us, is in us a well of water springing up to everlasting life." John iv. 14. The water is the Holy Spirit, and this is in us; it abides or dwells in those to whom it is given. It is a well, a living fountain, which cannot be spoken of any gracious habit whatever. All gracious habits are effects of the operation of the Spirit, but not the well itself; and, as it is natural and easy for a spring to bubble

up, so it belongs to the consolation of believers to know how easy it is to the Holy Spirit,—how ready he is, on account of his gracious inhabitation, to carry on the work of grace, holiness, and sanctification in them.

This is the hidden spring and cause of that inexpressible distance and difference that there is between believers and the rest of the world. Our “life is hid with Christ in God.” A blessed life believers have while here; dead to the world, and as dead in the world: a life that will issue in eternal glory: but nothing of this appears to the eyes of men. True, saith the apostle, for it is “hid with Christ in God.” It is hid in its causes, nature, operations, and means of preservation; but by this hidden life they are differenced from the perishing world; and if men will not allow that there is such a difference between them in this world, they will be forced to own it at the last day, when the sentences of “Come, ye blessed,” and “Go, ye cursed,” shall be openly denounced. There is a difference in their works, which, indeed, ought to be far greater than it is; but there is a greater difference in internal habitual grace, whereby the minds of believers are transformed initially into the image of God:—but these things will not bear the weight of this inconceivable distance; it depends principally on the inhabitation of the Spirit. The great difference between the two houses which Solomon built was, that God dwelt in the one, and he himself in the other. Though any two houses, as to their outward fabric, make the same appearance, yet, if the King dwell in the one, and a robber in the other, the one may be a palace, and the other a den. On this inhabitation of the Spirit, therefore, all the privileges of believers, and all their superiority over the men of the world, depend.

Of the Unction of the Spirit.

BELIEVERS are said to be anointed, or to have an UNCTION from the Holy One (1 John ii. 20); and it is

added (verse 27) "The anointing which ye have received abideth in you; and the same anointing teacheth you all things."

To understand this we may observe, that all persons and things which were dedicated to God under the Old Testament, were anointed with material oil. Kings, priests, and prophets; the sanctuary, the altar, and all the utensils of divine worship, were anointed; and all these were typical of what was to come; and had their first, proper, and full accomplishment in the person of Jesus Christ; and because he was to be the most holy, the spring and cause of all holiness in others, he had his name from hence; for MESSIAH in the Old Testament, and CHRIST in the New, are as much as the ANOINTED ONE. The unction of Christ consisted principally in the full communication of the Spirit under him, not by measure, in all his graces and gifts.

Believers have their unction immediately from Christ: "You have an unction from the Holy One;" and it consists in the communication of the Holy Spirit unto them. It is not the Spirit who anoints us; but he is the unction wherewith we are anointed by the Holy One; and there are two effects ascribed to it. The first is teaching, with a saving, permanent knowledge of the truth thereby produced in our minds:—"You have an unction—and you know all things;"—all the fundamental, essential truths of the gospel; all you need to know, that you may obey God truly, and be saved infallibly. Hence it is called "the anointing of our eyes with eye-salve, that we may see;" and so it answers to that unction of Christ by the Spirit, which made him "of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord."

To this also may be referred what is said of believers being made kings and priests; for it is an allusion to anointing of such persons of old. Whatever was typical therein, was fully accomplished in the unction of Christ to his office, as the sovereign King, Priest, and Prophet of the Church. Wherefore, by a participation in his unction, they are said to be made kings and priests, or a royal priesthood; for they partake of the

same Spirit wherewith he was anointed:—whereas therefore these titles denote the dignity of believers in their special relation to God, by this unction they are peculiarly dedicated and consecrated to him.

On this unction depends the stability of all believers. It is said to abide in them, which respects their permanency and establishment in the truth against all seducers; nor will any thing else be sufficient for this purpose. Temptations may come as a storm, which will quickly drive men from their greatest fleshly confidences. Hence oftentimes those who are forwardest to say, 'Though all men should forsake the truth, yet will not they,—are the forwardest upon trials so to do. Neither will mens' skill, or disputing abilities, secure them from being inveigled with fair pretences, or entangled with the cunning sleights of them who lie in wait to deceive. Nor will the best defences of flesh and blood stand firmly unshaken against powerful allurements on the one hand, and fierce persecutions on the other; but this unction, the apostle assures believers, will not fail; neither shall they fail because of it.

And to this end we may consider (1) The nature of the teaching which we have by this anointing:—"The anointing teacheth you." It is not merely an external, doctrinal teaching; but an internal, effectual operation of the Holy Ghost. He employs indeed the outward means of instruction by the word, and teacheth nothing but what is revealed therein; but he gives us an "understanding, that we may know him that is true;" and "opens our eyes, that we may clearly and spiritually see the wonderful things that are in the law;" and there are no teachings like his;—none so abiding, none so effectual. When spiritual things through this anointing are discovered in a spiritual manner, they take an immoveable possession of the minds of men. As God will destroy every oppressing yoke because of the anointing of Christ, so will he break every snare of seduction by the anointing of Christians. So it is promised, that, under the gospel, wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of the

times. Nothing will give stability in all seasons, but the wisdom and knowledge which are the effects of this teaching, when God gives us the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.

(2.) **WHAT** it is that he teacheth; and that is—"all things." So was the promise, that the Spirit should "teach us all things," and "bring all things to our remembrance that Christ hath said unto us," and "guide us into all truth." It is not "all things" absolutely that is intended, for in this life we know but in part; but "all things," and "all truth," with respect to the end of this promise and teaching, namely, the whole life of faith, with joy and consolation thereon, together with such a stability as shall secure believers from all attempts to draw them into error.

(3.) This teaching is always accompanied with the love of that truth wherein we are instructed, and delight in obedience to what it requires; and this is the grand criterion of this unction. Without this, however sublime our notions, however accurate our expressions, yet, as to the power and benefit of religion, we are but as sounding brass and tinkling cymbals: but when this Holy Spirit, in and by his teaching, breathes into our hearts a divine love unto, and complacency in the things we are taught,—when he enables us to taste how gracious the Lord is in them, rendering them sweeter to us than honey, or the honey-comb,—when he makes them our delight and joy, exciting and quickening the practical principles of our minds to a compliance with them in holy obedience, then have we that unction from the Holy One which will both sanctify and secure our souls unto the end.

I shall only add, that as we ascribe this anointing in a peculiar manner to the Spirit, as the Comforter of the Church, we may easily discern wherein the consolation which we receive by it doth consist;—for who can express that satisfaction, refreshment, and joy, which the mind is possessed with, in those spiritual, effectual teachings, which give it a clear apprehension of saving truth in its own nature and beauty, and enlarge the heart with love to it, and delight in it! It is true,

that the greatest part of believers are sometimes at a loss with respect to their spiritual state, or so disordered by temptations, that they do not receive a refreshing sense of those comforts and joys which are inseparable from this anointing: but still it is in itself that spring from whence their secret refreshments and supports arise; and they are able to conceive how their chief joys and comforts, under their heaviest troubles, are resolved into their spiritual understanding of the mysteries of divine love and grace in Christ; with that ineffable complacency and satisfaction which they find in them, whereby their wills are engaged into an unconquerable constancy in their choice; and there is no small consolation in a due apprehension of that spiritual dignity which ensues hereon; for when they meet with the greatest trouble and contempt in this world, a sense of their acceptance with God, as being made kings and priests unto him, yields them a refreshment which the world knows nothing of, and which themselves are not able to express.

The Spirit a Seal.

ANOTHER effect of the Holy Ghost, as the Comforter of the Church, is, that by him believers are SEAL-ED: "He who anointed us is God, who hath also sealed us." 2 Cor. i. 21, 22. And how this is done, the same apostle declares: "In whom also, after ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." Eph. i. 13: and (chap. iv. 30.) "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed to the day of redemption." In the first place, it is expressly said, that we are sealed with the Spirit, whereby the Spirit himself is expressed as this seal, and not any of his operations; as he is also directly said himself to be the pledge of our inheritance. In the latter, the words are (EN O ESPHRAGISTHETE) "in whom;"—in and by the receiving of whom, "ye are sealed." Wherefore no special act of the Spirit, but only a special effect of his communication unto us, seems to be intended hereby.

The common exposition of this sealing is taken from the nature and use of sealing among men. The sum of which is this,—sealing may be considered as a natural or moral action ; that is, with respect to the act of it as an act ; or with respect to its use and end. In the first way, it is the communication of the character or image that is on the seal, to the thing sealed : and so the sealing of the Spirit should consist in the communication of his own image to the soul ; and thus his sealing would be materially the same with our sanctification. The end and use of sealing among men is twofold. (1.) To give security to the performance of deeds, wills, &c. : and thus we may be said to be sealed when the promises of God are confirmed to our souls, and we are secured of them by the Holy Ghost ; but the truth is, this were to seal the promises of God, and not believers ; but it is persons, and not promises, that are said to be sealed. (2.) It is for the preservation of that which is sealed. Thus things precious and valuable are sealed up, that they may be kept safe and inviolable : and so it is that power which the Holy Ghost puts forth in the preservation of believers, which is intended : and in this respect they are said to be “ sealed unto the day of redemption.”

These things are often enlarged upon, and, what is commonly said to this purpose, is good and useful as to the substance of it ; but I cannot fully acquiesce in this interpretation ; for I am not satisfied that there is such an allusion herein to the sealing among men as is pretended : and if there be, as there are so many considerations of sealing, it will be hard to determine which is intended ; and if you take in more than one, then various effects will be ascribed to the Holy Ghost under the term of Sealing ; and so we shall never know what is that one determinate act and privilege which is intended. Besides, all things usually assigned to this sealing, are acts or effects of the Holy Ghost upon us ; whereas it is not said that the Holy Spirit seals us, but that we are sealed with him : he is God’s seal unto us.

As all our spiritual privileges are communicated to

us by Christ, so they consist in our participation of that fulness of them which is in him : and as they proceed from our union with him, so their principal end is conformity to him : and in him, in whom all things are conspicuous, we may learn the nature of those things, which in lesser measure, and much darkness, we are made partakers of. So we learn our unction in him : so we must enquire into the nature of our being sealed, in his sealing ; for as it is said, that " he who hath sealed us is God ;" so of him it is *emphatically* said, " For him hath God the Father sealed" (John vi. 27) ; and if we can learn aright how Christ was sealed, we shall learn how we are sealed.

The sealing of Christ by the Father is the communication of the Holy Spirit in all his fulness to him, authorizing him unto, and acting his divine power in all the acts and duties of his office, so as to evidence the presence of God with him, and approbation of him ; for the Holy Spirit, by his powerful operations in him and by him, did evince and manifest that he was called and appointed of God, owned by him, and accepted of him. Hence the sin of them who despised this seal of God was unpardonable ; for God neither will nor can give greater testimony to his approbation of any person than by the great seal of his Spirit : and this was given to Christ in the fulness of it. He was " declared to be the Son of God," with power " according to the Spirit of holiness" (Rom. i. 4) and " justified in the Spirit," or by his power, evidencing that God was with him. 1 Tim. iii. 16.—Thus did God seal the Head of the Church with the Holy Spirit ; and thence we may best learn how the members are sealed.

God's sealing of believers then, is his gracious communication of the Holy Ghost unto them, so to act his divine power in them, as to enable them unto all the duties of their holy calling, evidencing them to be accepted with him, both to themselves and others, and asserting their preservation to eternal salvation. The effects of this sealing are, gracious operations of the Spirit in and upon believers ; but the sealing itself, is the communication of the Spirit unto them. Further

to evidence the nature of this privilege, we may observe,

That when any persons are effectually called, they are brought into many new relations,—to God himself as his children,—to Jesus Christ as his members,—to saints and angels as the family of God; they are also called to many new works and duties which they knew nothing of before. In short, they are brought into a new world; erected by the new creation; and whatever way they turn themselves, they say “Old things are past away; behold, all things are become new.” In this state, how shall they behave themselves aright, and answer the holy station wherein they are placed? This no man can do of himself; for who is sufficient for these things?

In this state then God owns them, and gives them his Holy Spirit to fit them for their relations, to enable them unto their duties, to act their new principles, and every way to discharge the work they are called to; he gives them the Spirit of power, of love, and of a sound mind: and hereby doth God seal them;—for

Hereby he gives his testimony to them that they are his, owned by him, accepted with him,—his sons or children; which is his seal; for if they were not such, he would never have given his Spirit to them: and herein consists the greatest testimony that God doth give, and the only seal that he doth set unto any in this world. This the apostle Peter proves (Acts xv. 8, 9.); for on the debate of that question, Whether God accepted of those believers who did not observe the rights of Moses? he proves that he did, because he “bare them witness;”—and how did he do it? “By giving them the Holy Ghost;” and that not by miraculous operations merely, but by his gracious operations,—“purifying their hearts by faith!”

Hereby he gives believers assurance of their relation to him, of their interest in him, of his love and favour to them. It has been generally conceived that this sealing is that which gives assurance to believers: and so it does; though the way whereby it does so has

not been rightly apprehended : and, therefore, none have been able to declare the special nature of that act of the Spirit whereby he seals us, whence such assurance shall ensue. But indeed, it is not any act of the Spirit in us that is the ground of our assurance, but the communication of the Spirit unto us. This the apostle plainly testifies : " Hereby, we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us" (1 John iii. 24.) : and again, in chap. iv. 13, " Hereby know we that we dwell in God, and he in us ; because he hath given us of his Spirit." This is the great evidence, the great ground of assurance which we have, that God has taken us into a near and dear relation to himself, because he has given us his Spirit,—that great and heavenly gift which he will impart to no others :—and indeed on this one hinge depends the whole case of that assurance which believers are capable of. If the Spirit of God dwell in us, we are his ; " but if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

Hereby God evidenceth them unto the world : he marks them for his own ; so that the world cannot but take notice of them. Where God sets this seal, such effects will be produced as shall fall under the observation of the world. Though the world is blinded by prejudice, and under the power of a prevalent enmity against spiritual things, yet it cannot but discover what a change is made in those whom God thus sealeth ; and how, by the gifts and graces of the Spirit which they hate, they are differenced from other men ; and this keeps up the enmity that is in the world between the seeds ; for God's sealing of believers shews his special acceptance of them, which fills the hearts of them who are acted with the spirit of Cain, with hatred and revenge. All other causes of difference are capable of a composition ; but this about the seal of God can never be composed : and it follows from hence, that those who are thus sealed, cannot but separate themselves from the most of the world, whereby it is still more evident to whom they belong.

Hereby God seals believers unto the day of redemption, or everlasting salvation ; for the Spirit thus given

unto them is, as we have shewn already, to abide with them for ever, as a "well of water in them, springing up into everlasting life."

The Spirit an Earnest.

THE Holy Spirit is said to be an *earnest*. It is not any act of the Spirit in us or upon us ; but he himself is the earnest. This is expressed in every place where it is mentioned. 2 Cor. i. 22,—“the earnest of the Spirit :” that earnest which is the Spirit, or the Spirit as an earnest. And in Eph. i. 14, it is expressly said, that the Holy Spirit is the “earnest of our inheritance.” God gives us his Holy Spirit to dwell in us, and to abide with us, as an earnest of our future inheritance.

The general end of an earnest or pledge, is alluded to in this name of the Spirit ; which is to give security of something that is future. God, in his sovereign grace and bounty, gives his Holy Spirit to believers ; and withal lets them know, that it is with a design to give them much more in his appointed season, even their whole inheritance. How the Spirit is an earnest of that inheritance, may be briefly declared.

Christ himself, in his own person, is the heir of all things ; so he was appointed of God, and therefore the whole inheritance is absolutely his. Man, by his sin, had forfeited his right to all the ends of his creation, both on Earth and in Heaven. Death and Hell were all that the human race were entitled to : but yet all the glorious things that God had provided were not to be cast away,—an heir was to be provided for them. When man had lost his right, God did not so take the forfeiture as to seize it all into the hands of justice, and destroy it ; but he invested the whole inheritance in his Son. This inheritance, as to our interest in it, lay under a forfeiture ; and as to us, it must be redeemed, before we can be made partakers of it. Wherefore the Lord Christ, who had a right in his own person to the whole, was yet to redeem it from under the forfeiture, and purchase the possession of it for us ; and thence it

is called *the Purchased Possession*: and hereon he became the great *Trustee* for the whole church, and had their interest in this inheritance committed to him. No man, therefore, can have any right to it, but by virtue of an interest in Christ, and union with him.

The way in which we come to have an interest in Christ, and thereby a right to the inheritance, is by the participation of the Spirit of Christ; for it is by the Spirit of Adoption, the Spirit of the Son, that we are made children. "Now," saith the apostle, "if ye are children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ."

Hence it is manifest how this Holy Spirit becomes the earnest of our inheritance; for by him, that is, by the communication of him unto us, we are made joint heirs with Christ, which gives us our right and title, whereby our natures are, as it were, inserted into the conveyance of the great and full inheritance of our grace and glory: and he is to be an earnest until or unto the redemption of the purchased possession; for after a man has obtained a firm title to an inheritance, it may be a long time before he can be admitted into the actual possession of it; and he may have many difficulties to conflict with in the mean time. So it is in this case. The earnest of the Spirit given unto us, whereby we become co-heirs with Christ, whose Spirit we are partakers of, secures the title of the inheritance: but before we can come to the full possession of it, we have not only many spiritual trials to conflict with, but our bodies also are liable to death and corruption. Wherefore, whatever earnest we may enjoy, yet we cannot enter into the actual possession of the whole inheritance until not only our souls are delivered from all sin and temptations, but our bodies also are rescued out of the dust of the grave; and this is signally called the "*Redemption of the Body*."

In like manner we are said to receive "the first fruits of the Spirit" (Rom. viii. 23); that is, the Spirit himself, as the beginning and pledge of future glory. The apostle is discoursing about the liberty of the whole creation, from its present state of bondage; with re-

spect to which he saith, that believers themselves having not yet obtained a full deliverance, do groan after its perfect accomplishment : but yet, saith he, we have the beginning of it, the first fruits of it, in the communication of the Spirit unto us ; “ for where the Spirit of God is, there is liberty : ” and though we are not capable of the full and perfect estate of the liberty provided for the children of God, while we are in this world, conflicting with the remainders of sin, yet, where the Spirit of God is, there we have the first fruits of that fulness of our redemption : there is liberty in the real beginning of it, and assured consolation, because it shall be consummated in the appointed season.

These are some of the spiritual benefits and privileges which believers enjoy from the Holy Ghost as a Comforter : and we may observe (1.) That all evangelical privileges which believers enjoy in this world, centre in the person of the Holy Spirit. He is the great promise that Christ made to his disciples, the great legacy which he has bequeathed to them. The grant made to him by the Father, when he had done all his will, was this of the Holy Spirit, to be communicated by him to the church. This he received of the Father, as the complement of his reward, wherein he saw of the “ travail of his soul, and was satisfied.” This Spirit he now gives to believers ; and no tongue can express the benefits which they receive thereby. Therein are they anointed and sealed,—therein do they receive the earnest and first fruits of immortality and glory. In a word, therein are they taken into a participation with Christ himself, in all his honour and glory. Hereby is their condition rendered honourable, safe, comfortable, and the whole inheritance is unchangeably secured unto them. In this one privilege therefore of receiving the Spirit, are all others included. (2.) No one way, or thing, or similitude, can express or represent the greatness of this privilege. It is anointing, it is sealing, it is an earnest and first fruit ;—every thing whereby the love of God and the blessed security of our condition may be expressed or intimated to us ;—for what greater pledge can we have

of the favour of God,—what greater dignity can we enjoy,—what greater assurance can we have of future glory, than that God hath given us his Holy Spirit? And (3.) Hence also it is manifest how abundantly willing he is that the heirs of promise should receive strong consolation in all their distresses, when they fly for refuge to the hope that is set before them.

APPLICATION.

“**GRIEVE** not the Holy Spirit.” Consider who he is, what he has done for you, how much you are concerned in his continuance with you; and remember, that he is a free, infinitely wise, and holy agent in all that he doth,—who came freely unto you, and can withdraw from you;—therefore, grieve him not.

Grief is here ascribed to the Holy Spirit, not properly, but metaphorically, in order to give us such an apprehension of things as we are able to receive. What may justly grieve a good man, and what he will do when undeservedly grieved, represent to us what we are to understand of our own condition, with respect to the Holy Ghost, when he is said to be grieved by us: and grief in the sense here intended, is a trouble of mind arising from an apprehension of unkindness not deserved,—of disappointments not expected, on account of a near concern in those by whom we are grieved. Hence we may see what it is we are warned of, when we are cautioned not to grieve the Holy Spirit. As,

1. There must be unkindness in what we do. Sin has various aspects towards God,—of guilt, filth, and the like; but grieving him denotes unkindness, or a defect of love, answerable to the testimonies we have received of his love to us. He is the Spirit of Love,—he is Love. All his actings towards us and in us are fruits of his love; and all our joys and consolations arise from a sense of the love of God, communicated in an endearing way of love unto our souls. This requires a return of love and delight in all duties of obedience on our part. When, instead hereof, by our

negligence and carelessness, or otherwise, we fall into those things which he abhors, he observes the unkindness and ingratitude which is therein, and is therefore said to be grieved by us.

2. Disappointment in expectation. Properly speaking, disappointment is utterly inconsistent with the prescience and omniscience of the Spirit of God. But we are disappointed when things fall out contrary to expectations, and to the means we employed for their accomplishment; and when the means that God useth towards us do not, by reason of our sins, produce the effect they are suited unto, God speaks of himself as disappointed. Now disappointment causeth grief. As when a father hath used all means for the education of a child, and expended much of his estate therein, if he, through dissoluteness or idleness, deceive his expectation, it fills him with grief. The Spirit of God hath done great things for us; and they all have a tendency to an increase in holiness, light, and love. Where they have not a suitable effect, there is that disappointment which causes grief.

3. The concern of the Holy Spirit in us, concurs to his being grieved; for we are grieved by those in whom we are particularly concerned,—those whom we love, or to whom we are related. The miscarriages of others are passed over without any such trouble. Now the Holy Spirit has undertaken the office of a Comforter, and stands in that relation to us; and his love towards us has been already declared. Hence he is so concerned in us, that he is said to be grieved with our sins when he is not so at the sins of others, to whom he stands in no special relation.

Now we may be said to grieve the Spirit (1.) When we are not influenced by his love and kindness to answer his mind and will in all holy obedience, accompanied with joy, love, and delight. This he deserves at our hands, this he expects from us; but where it is neglected, when we attend to duties with an unwilling mind, or servile frame, we are said to grieve him.

(2.) When we lose the sense and impression of signal mercies received by him,—when we forget the

grace, kindness, and condescension of the Holy Spirit in his dwelling in us, and communicating the love and grace of God unto us, we may well be said to grieve him.

(3.) Some sins there are which, in a special manner, above others, do grieve the Holy Spirit. These our apostle discourseth of in 1 Cor. iii. 15—20; and by the connection of the words, he seems to make corrupt communication, which always hath a tendency to corruption of conversation, to be a sin of this nature. Verse 29, 30.

When any persons continue in those ways whereby he is grieved, he is said to be vexed. Thus it is said of some of old, "They rebelled and vexed his Holy Spirit; therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them." This is the progress of these things. If those whom we are concerned in, as children or other relations, fall into evil ways, we are at first grieved; and this grief is attended with pity and compassion, with an earnest endeavour for their recovery; but if, notwithstanding all our endeavour, they persist in their froward ways, then we are vexed with them; which includes an addition of anger and indignation to our former grief and sorrow. Yet in this posture of things we cease not to attempt their cure for a season, which, if it succeed not, but they continue in their obstinacy, then we resolve to treat with them no more, but to leave them to themselves;—and thus it is in the dealings of the Holy Spirit with us; and woe be to us when he shall depart from us! So when the old world would not be brought to repentance by the dispensation of the Spirit of Christ in the preaching of Noah (1 Pet. iii. 19, 20) God said That his Spirit should give over, and not always "contend with man." Gen. vi. 3.—Now, the cessation of his operations comprizes three things:—1, A total removal of the means of grace, as to all the ways of revealing the mind of God; or as to the efficacy of the word, even where the outward dispensation of it is continued, so that, "hearing, they shall hear, but not understand;"—for it is by the word that he strives

with men. 2, A forbearance of all chastisement, out of a gracious design to heal and recover them. 3, A giving them up to themselves, or leaving them to their own ways.

The consideration of these things is incumbent upon us. It is our wisdom and duty to consider the ways and degrees of the Spirit's departure from provoking sinners, as well as those of his approach unto us, with love and grace. David, on his sin, feared nothing more than that God should "take his Holy Spirit from him;" and this fear should influence us to the utmost watchfulness against sin;—for though he should not utterly forsake us, which as to those who are true believers is contrary to the tenor, promise, and grace of the new covenant, yet he may so withdraw his presence from us, as that we may spend the remainder of our days in darkness and sorrow.—"Let him therefore that standeth, take heed lest he fall."

Let us beware of the very entrances of the course described. Have there been any such evils in us as have grieved the Spirit?—as we love our souls, let us take care that we do not vex him by a continuance in them. Has he been grieved by our negligence as to duties,—by our indulgence to any lust, or by our conformity to the world?—let not our continuance therein make it his vexation. Remember, that while he is but grieved, he continues to supply us with all due means for our recovery. He will do when he is yet vexed; but with such a mixture of anger as shall make us know that what we have done is an evil and a bitter thing; but have any proceeded further, and continued long to vex him, and refused his instructions, when accompanied perhaps with sore afflictions or inward distresses? Let such souls rouse up themselves to lay hold on him, for he is ready to depart,—it may be, forever!—and

We may do well to consider the miserable condition of those who are thus utterly forsaken by him. When we see a man who has lived in a plentiful manner, brought to extreme want, seeking his bread in rags, from door to door, the spectacle is sad, though we

know he brought this misery on himself by profusion or debauchery; but how sad it is to think of a man who had once great light and conviction, made an amiable profession, was adorned with useful gifts, and held in estimation on this account,—now despoiled of all his ornaments, having lost light, and life, and gifts, and profession, and lying as a poor withered branch on the dunghill of the world!—and the misery hereof will be increased, when we consider that the Spirit of God is not only departed from him, but is become his enemy, and fights against him, whereby he is devoted to irrecoverable ruin!

ON SPIRITUAL GIFTS.

THE Second Part of the *Dispensation of the Spirit* for the edification of the Church, consists in his *Communication of Spiritual Gifts* to the members of it, as their places and stations therein may require. By his work of saving grace, he makes all the elect “living stones;” and by his communication of spiritual gifts, he builds those stones into a temple for the habitation of the living God;—he unites them into one mystical body, under the Lord Christ, as a *head of influence*, by faith and love; and he unites them as an organical body under him, as a *head of rule*, by gifts and spiritual abilities. Their *nature* is one and the same by grace; their *use* is various by gifts. Every one is a part of the body of Christ, by the same animating Spirit of grace: but one is an *eye*, another a *hand*, another a *foot* in the body, by virtue of peculiar gifts;—“For unto every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ.” Eph. iv. 7.

These gifts, indeed, are not saving, sanctifying graces, nor were the most extraordinary and miraculous such; yet they are not to be despised:—they are “the powers of the world to come,” by which the kingdom of Christ is preserved and propagated; and though they are not grace, yet they are the means by which all grace is ingenerated and exercised; and

therefore they are frequently mentioned in the Scripture as the peculiar privilege of the New Testament ; and we are exhorted earnestly to seek them, especially such as are the most conducive to edification.—1 Cor. xii. 31.

The signal promise of the communication of these gifts is recorded in Ps. lxxviii. 18, “Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led Captivity captive, thou hast received gifts for men ;”—and these words are applied by the apostle to that communication of spiritual gifts from Christ, whereby the Church was founded and edified, Eph. iv. 8. And whereas it is foretold in the Psalm that Christ should *receive gifts*, that is, to *bestow them on men* ; so he did this, *by receiving the Spirit*, who is the immediate author of them all, as Peter declares (Acts ii. 23) “Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear,”—namely, the miraculous gifts conferred on the apostles at the day of Pentecost.

The general name of these endowments is *DOMATA* ; so the apostle renders Eph. iv. 8, from Ps. lxxviii. 18. *Dona, Gifts*—that is, free and undeserved effects of divine bounty ; hence called “the gift of God,” John iv. 10.—“The gifts of the Holy Ghost,” Acts x. 45.—“The gift of Christ,” Eph. iv. 7.—“The heavenly gift,” Heb. vi. 4.—all expressing the freedom of their communication on the part of the Father, Son, and Spirit.

With respect to their *special nature*, they are called *spirituals*, or *spiritual gifts*, 1 Cor. xiv. 1, and 1 Cor. xii. 31. They are not *natural*, nor *moral*, but *spiritual* endowments ; their *author* is the Holy Spirit ; their *nature* is spiritual, and the *objects* about which they are exercised are spiritual things.

With regard to the *manner* of their communication, they are called, Heb. ii. 4, *Distributions*, or *Partitions of the Holy Ghost*, because they are of various kinds ; not at any time given to any one person, but variously distributed to men for the advantage of the Church.

"If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing?" &c. 1 Cor. xii. 16, &c.

Extraordinary Offices and Gifts.

THERE are four things which constitute an extraordinary officer in the Church of God ;—1. An extraordinary *call* to an office, such as none other can have, by virtue of any law or constitution whatever ;—2. An extraordinary *power* communicated to persons so called, enabling them to perform the duties to which they are called ;—3. Extraordinary *gifts* for the exercise of that power ;—4. Extraordinary *employment*, as to its extent and measure, requiring extraordinary zeal, labour, and self-denial. All these must concur in those offices which we call Extraordinary.

Thus it was with the *apostles*, *prophets*, and *evangelists*, at the first : They were extraordinary *teaching officers*, 1 Cor. xii. 28. and Eph. iv. 11. There were also persons endowed with gifts of miracles, *healing*, and *tongues* : besides these, there were *prophets* also, who had a temporary extraordinary ministry in the Church, Eph. iv. 11. ; and the exercise of their ministry is declared, Acts xiii. 1. These were placed in the second rank of officers, next the apostles, between them and the evangelists. They received *immediate revelations* from the Holy Spirit in matters relating to the present duty of the Church, as Acts xiii. 2. They also predicted future events ; as Agabus, Acts xxi. 10, 11. These officers Jesus Christ granted to his Church for a season, at its first planting ; and their whole qualification with spiritual gifts was the immediate work of the Holy Ghost. It was my design to manifest how vain is the pretence of some to a kind of succession to these officers, who have neither an extraordinary call, gifts, nor employments, but who are pleased to assume to themselves an extraordinary power over the churches and disciples of Christ, such as neither evangelists, nor prophets, nor apostles themselves ever claimed ; but this matter of *power* is fuel to the proud ambitious minds of *Diotrephists* ; and, as now circumstanced,

with other advantages, is useful to the corrupt lusts of men ; and therefore it is no wonder if it be pretended to, and greedily sought, by such as have neither call to the ministry nor gifts for it :—but we must return to the consideration of extraordinary spiritual gifts.

These were of two sorts :—*First*, Such as exceeded all the powers and faculties of men's minds :—such was the gifts of miracles, of healing, and the like. These did not consist in any faculty always resident in the persons who possessed them, but were an effect of immediate and extraordinary influence transiently affecting their minds. All extraordinary officers had these gifts.

Secondly,—They were such as consisted in extraordinary improvements of the faculties of the minds of men ; such as *wisdom, knowledge, utterance, &c.* Now, where these were bestowed, as on the apostles and evangelists, they differed only in degree from those which are ordinary and still continued. All these gifts, of both kinds, are expressly and distinctly enumerated by our apostle in one place, 1 Cor. xii. 7—11. “ But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal ; ” — “ For to every one is given, by the Spirit, the word of *wisdom* ; to another, the word of *knowledge*, by the same Spirit ; to another *faith*, by the same Spirit ; to another the *gift of healing*, by the same Spirit ; to another the working of *miracles* ; to another *prophecy* ; to another the *discerning of spirits* ; to another *divers kinds of tongues* ; to another the *interpretation of tongues* ; but all these worketh that one and self-same Spirit, dividing to every one severally, as he will.”

These nine sorts of gifts flourished in the first age of the Church, and were the life of its extraordinary ministry. There was no *certain limited* time for the cessation of these gifts. Those peculiar to the apostles were commensurate to their lives. None, after their decease, had either apostolical office, power, or gifts. The same may be said of the evangelists : nor have we any undoubted testimony that any gifts, truly *miraculous*, and every way above the faculties of men, were

communicated to any persons after the expiration of that generation who conversed with Christ in the flesh, or of those who received the Holy Ghost by their ministry. Probably, God might, on some occasions, for a longer season, put forth his power in some miraculous operations; and so he may yet do, and perhaps sometimes doth; but the superstition of ensuing ages, inventing and divulging innumerable miracles, false and foolish, was most injurious to the gospel, and opened the way to impose on Christians endless delusions; but though all these gifts and operations ceased in some respects, some of them absolutely, and some of them as to the immediate manner of communication and degree of excellency, yet, so far as the edification of the Church was concerned in them, something that is analogous to them was and is continued. He who gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, gave also some *pastors and teachers*; and as he furnished the former with extraordinary gifts, so far as any thing of the like kind is needful for the continual edification of the Church, he bestows it on the latter also.

Ordinary Gifts.

THESE are called *ordinary*, not as if they were absolutely common to all, or not to be highly esteemed; but by this term they are distinguished from those just mentioned, which exceeded all the powers and faculties of men; and because they are continued in the ordinary state of the Church, and will be so until the consummation of all things.

We have already referred to Eph. iv. 7, &c. wherein, at one view, the grant, institution, benefit, and continuance of the Christian ministry is clearly and fully represented; and the design of this discourse is to declare that the gift and grant of the ministry and ministers, of the office and the persons to discharge it, is a most eminent fruit of the mediatory power of Christ, with his love and care towards his Church;—and those of whom the apostle speaks “*unto every one of us,*”

are the officers or ministers afterwards enumerated. **Unto** them is *grace given*;—sanctifying grace is not there intended, but a participation of a gracious favour with respect to a particular end. This trust is, in a way of grace, committed to us; and that according to “the measure of the gift of Christ,”—as he is pleased to measure out the gift.

He himself gave, verse 11. It is the foundation of all Church order, power, and worship, that the gift and grant of Christ is the original of the ministry. If it had not been so given of him, it would not have been lawful for any of the sons of men to institute such an office;—and here it will follow that the introduction of officers into the Church, not appointed by him, is an act of opposition to his authority, and a contempt of his care and bounty: and if an examination might be admitted by this rule (as it will one day, whether men will or not) some great names now in the Church would scarce be able to preserve their station: Popes, Cardinals, Metropolitans, Diocesan Prelates, Arch-deacons, Commissaries, Officials, and I know not what other monstrous products of an incestuous conjunction between secular pride and ecclesiastical degeneracy, would think themselves severely treated by this rule: but so it must be at last, and that unavoidably.

The eminency of this grant appears from the grandeur of its introduction. It was given by Christ, when “he ascended up on high, and led captivity captive.” verse 8. The words are taken from Ps. lxxviii. 17; which passage refers to the glorious appearance of God on Mount Sinai, in giving the law;—then God led captivity captive, in the destruction of Pharoah and the Egyptians, who had long held his people in cruel bondage:—but the words are applied to Christ, who gloriously ascended “far above all Heavens, to fill all things” (verse 10); having effectually conquered Satan and all his powers. Then “he received gifts *for men*,” or “*in man*”—in the *human nature*, as the Hebrew words may be rendered. Christ received these gifts in the human nature, to confer them on others. Now, to what end was this glorious theatre, as it were, erec-

ted, and all this preparation made? It was to display the greatness of the gift he would bestow, and the glory of the work which he would effect;—and this was, to furnish the Church with Ministers, and ministers with gifts for the discharge of their office and duty; and it will one day appear that there is more glory, more excellency, in giving one poor minister to a congregation, by furnishing him with spiritual gifts for the discharge of his duty, than in the pompous instalment of a thousand Popes, Cardinals, &c. &c.

He gave gifts.—The ministry is a gift of Christ; and the spiritual gifts which belong to it are its life, and inseparable from its being. A ministry without gifts is not a ministry of Christ's giving. To set up such a ministry is to despise Christ, frustrate the ends of the ministry, and deceive the souls of men. To set up a ministry which may be continued by outward forms, and orders of men only, without any communication of gifts from Christ, is to despise his authority and care. The grand design of the ministry is "the perfection of the saints,—the edifying of the body of Christ;" but this cannot be done without spiritual gifts; and, therefore, a ministry destitute of them is a mock-ministry, and no ordinance of Christ.

The eminency of this gift appears also in the *diversity* of the offices and officers which Christ appointed. He knew that there would be a twofold state of the Church;—the first, of its *foundation*, when an extraordinary aggression was to be made on the kingdom of Satan in the world, and when a new order and rule of worship was to be established all over the earth. For these purposes he gave apostles, prophets, and evangelists. It was necessary that these should have their call and authority from Christ, antecedently to all order and power in the Church; for the very being of the Church depended on their power of office; but this, without such an immediate power from Christ, no man can pretend to: and what was done originally by their persons, is now done by their word and doctrine; for the Church is built "on the foundation of the

apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone."

There is also a *second* state of the Church, in its *edification*, which is to be carried on according to the rules given by Christ, in the ordinary administration of the institutions of the gospel. To this end Christ gave ordinary officers, pastors, and teachers, who, by his direction, were ordained in every Church. Acts xiv. 23, 24.

But, whereas extraordinary officers were given by Christ, by his immediate call, and communication of power to them, it does not appear how he gives these *ordinary* officers unto it. I answer, He did it originally, and continueth to do it, by the following means:—He doth it by the law and rule of the gospel, wherein he hath appointed this office of the ministry in his Church, and so always to be continued. If there be not an ordinance of Christ to this purpose, or if its force be now expired, then we must confess that the whole office is a mere usurpation; but if he hath given pastors and teachers to his Church, to continue until all his saints, in all ages, "come to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. iv. 12.); and he hath promised to be with them, as such, to the end (Matt. xxviii. 18, 20.); if the apostles "ordained elders in every city" (Acts xiv. 23. Titus i. 5.) who were made "overseers, or bishops of the flocks" by the Holy Ghost (Acts xx. 28.); and if believers are obliged to yield obedience to them (Heb. xiii. 7, 17.) then this foundation standeth firm and unshaken as the ordinances of Heaven; and as there is no intimation whatever in the Scriptures of any state of the Church, wherein the disciples of Christ may or ought to live without the orderly guidance of the ministers, it is vain to imagine that any defect in other men, any apostacy of visible churches, should render them incapable of erecting a regular ministry over them. To suppose, that because the Church of Rome and its adherents have, by their apostacy, lost an evangelical ministry among them,—that therefore others "to whom the word of God is come," and has been

made effectual for their salvation, have not sufficient warrant from the word to yield obedience to all the commands of Christ, or that in so doing he will not accept them, is fit only for men who have a trade in religion to drive for their own private advantage.

Jesus Christ continues this office by bestowing spiritual gifts and abilities on men, to enable them to discharge the duties of it. Spiritual gifts do not, indeed, of themselves, make any man a minister; yet no man can, according to the mind of Christ, be a minister without them. Wherefore, supposing the continuance of the institution, if Christ, at any time, or in any place, were to cease to bestow spiritual gifts, then, and in that place, the ministry itself must cease. To erect a ministry by virtue of outward order, rites, and ceremonies, without gifts for the edification of the Church, is but to hew a block with axes, and planes, and set it up for an image to be adored. To make a man a minister who can do nothing of the peculiar work of the ministry,—nothing towards the only end of it in the church, is to set up a dead carcase, fastening it to a post, and expecting it should do you work and service.

Jesus Christ continues this office by giving power to his Church in all ages, to call and separate to the work of the ministry such as he hath fitted and gifted for it. This power in the Church is not despotic or lordly; but consists in a right and ability to act in this matter obediently to the commands of Christ. Hence the act of the Church is merely the instituted means of conveying authority and office from Christ to persons called thereto. The Church does not give them any authority of its own, or resident in itself, but only, in a way of obedience to Christ, they transmit power from him to persons so called. Hence they become ministers of Christ, and not of the bishops, or churches, or men, holding their office from Christ himself, by the law and rule of the gospel; so that whoever despiseth them, despiseth him also in them. Some would have the ministers of the gospel to derive all their authority from the people who choose them; and some from the

bishops who ordain them; but this is to make them ministers of men, and servants of men, and to constitute other masters between them and Christ.

The Church has no power to call any person to the office of the ministry, where Christ hath not gone before it in the designation of that person by an endowment of spiritual gifts; for, if the whole authority of the ministry be from Christ, and if he never gives it but where he bestows ministerial gifts, then to call any to the work whom he hath not previously gifted, is to set him aside, and act by our own authority.

The order in which a Church may call any person to the office of the ministry among them, and over them, is, by their solemn joint submission to him in the Lord, as to all the powers and duties of his office, certified by their election of him. It is concerning this outward order, in calling men to the ministry, that the world is filled with disputes; but whatever order be adopted, if the things before mentioned be not observed, it is of no validity or authority:—on the other hand, admit that the authority of the ministry depends on the institution of Christ; that he calls men to this office by the collation of spiritual gifts unto them; and that the acting of the Church herein is but an instituted moral means of communicating office-power from Christ to such persons,—then the outward mode need not be much contended about.

It may be proved to be a beam of truth from the light of nature, that no man should be imposed upon a Church without their consent; considering that his whole work is to be conversant with their understanding, judgments, wills, and affections; and that this should be done by their own choice, as the Scriptures manifestly declare, Numb. viii. 9, 10. Acts i. 23, 26. Acts vi. 35. Acts xiv. 23; and that this method was sacredly observed in the primitive Churches, cannot modestly be denied.

The Lord Christ continueth his bestowing of this gift of the ministry, by the solemn ordinance of setting apart those who are called in this manner, by fast-

ing, prayer, and imposition of hands, Acts xiv. 25 chap. xiii. 2. 1 Tim. iv. 14, By these means, I say doth the Lord Christ continue to declare that "he accounts men to be faithful, and puts them into the ministry."

The substance of what we affirm is this: That there is special dispensation and work of the Holy Spirit, in providing able ministers of the New Testament for the edification of the Church; and that he doth exert his power and exercise his authority in the communication of spiritual gifts; without a participation of which, no man hath (*de jure*) any lot or portion in this ministration.

Jesus Christ hath faithfully promised to be present with his Church unto "the end of the world;" and this his presence renders the Church a congregation essentially distinct from all other societies and assemblies of men. Let men be formed into what order you please, or derive authority by any claim whatever, yet, if Christ be not present with them, they are no Church, nor can all the powers under Heaven make them such. (Matt. xviii. 20. Rev. xxi. 3.)

This promised presence of Christ is by his Spirit. We speak not of his *essential* presence with respect to the immensity of his divine nature; nor doth it respect his humanity; for where he promised this his presence, he informed his disciples that he must depart from them; on which they were filled with sorrow, until they were assured he would make good the promise of his presence with them; and who, or what it was that should supply his bodily absence. This was his Holy Spirit, whom he would send in his name, place, and stead, to do all to them and for them which he had yet to do with them and for them. (See John xiv. 26, &c.—xv. 6, &c.)

This presence of the Spirit is secured to the Church by an unchangeable everlasting covenant: "As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord: My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of

the mouth of thy seed's seed, from henceforth and for ever." Isa. lix. 21. This is God's covenant with the gospel-church, to be erected when the Redeemer shall come out of Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob (verse 20); and as the continuance of the word unto the Church in all ages is by this promise secured (without which it would come to nothing) so is the presence of the Spirit secured to it; without which all covenant relation between God and it would cease, and there would be no Church, no ordinance, no acceptable worship.

Hence the gospel is called "the Ministration of the Spirit;" and the ministers of it, "the Ministers of the Spirit," 2 Cor. iii. 6.; for it is by the assistance of the Spirit that any persons are enabled to administer the gospel and its institutions of worship, according to the mind of God, and to the edification of the Church; also, by the ministration of the gospel, the Spirit himself is, in all ages, communicated to the disciples of Christ. Gal. iii. 2.

Now, the great end for which the Spirit is thus promised and communicated under the gospel, is, the continuance and preservation of the Church in the world. God has promised that the kingdom of Christ shall endure to the end of time; and this must be either the work of God or of men; and if it be of God, it must be by the communication of his Spirit:—and whereas the Church falls under a double consideration (its *internal* and *external* form) the first is, as we have shewn, by his communicating effectual grace to the elect;—the latter is, by the communication of gifts to the guides, rulers, officers, and ministers of it, and to all its members, according to their place and capacity.

The communication of such gifts to the ordinary ministry of the Church in all ages, is plainly asserted in various places of the Scripture. The nature of this work is declared in the parable of the talents, Matt. xxx. 13—31. The state of the Church, from the ascension of Christ until his second coming, is there represented. In this season his servants are entrusted with the affairs of his kingdom, the care of his Church,

and the propagation of his gospel: for which purpose various talents are distributed, the least of which is sufficient to encourage the possessor to its use and exercise. These talents are the gifts with which Christ, by his Spirit, endows his ministers for the service of the Church.

In like manner, it is said, Romans xii. 1—8, "As we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having, therefore, gifts, differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy," &c. &c. From this passage it is plain that the apostle is speaking about that edification of the Church which is necessary in all ages and conditions;—that the principle of all administrations therein is gifts received from Christ by his Spirit;—and that these gifts furnish not only ability for duty, but rule and measure to every service to be performed in the Church. Every one is to act therein according to his gift, and no otherwise.

These gifts, as they are bestowed to that end, are indispensably necessary to gospel administrations. These administrations are, in their nature, use, signification, and efficacy, spiritual;—it is, therefore, by spiritual gifts alone that they may be managed. Hence these things live and die together;—where the one is not, the other cannot be. We also plead the event, even in our own days. The Holy Spirit does continue to dispense spiritual gifts to those ministers of the gospel who are called to their office according to his mind and will. The opposition that is made hereto by profane scoffers, is not to be regarded. The experience of those who are humble and wise is appealed unto. Have they not an experience of this administration? Do they not find the presence of the Spirit himself, by his various gifts in those by whom spiritual things are administered to them? Have they not a proof of Christ speaking in them, by the assistance of his Spirit, making the word mighty unto all its proper ends? And the experience of those who have received these gifts,—of the special assistance

which they enjoy in the exercise of them, may also be pleaded. Indeed, the profaneness of a contrary apprehension is intolerable among such as profess themselves Christians; for any to boast that they are sufficient of themselves for the dispensation of the gospel, by their own endowments, natural or acquired, without the peculiar gifts of the Holy Spirit, is a renunciation of all interest in the promises of Christ to the church, and the continuance of his presence therein. It will at length appear, that where the gifts of the Holy Ghost are excluded from their ministration, Christ himself is excluded, the Holy Spirit is excluded, the true edification of the church is at an end, and so are all the real concerns of the gospel!

It yet remains more particularly to point out, What are those gifts by which the Holy Ghost qualifies men for the gospel ministry; and how they may be attained and improved.

First, What are the gifts whereby men are fitted for the ministry?

The first great duty of the ministry is, the dispensation of the doctrine of the gospel. Hence it is given in charge to all the ministers of the gospel (Acts xx. 28. 1 Pet. v. 2. 1 Tim. i. 3. Chap. v. 17. iv. 13—16, &c.); for this is the principal means appointed by Christ for the edification of his church,—by which spiritual life is produced and preserved; and with respect to this duty, three things are required:—

1. *Wisdom, knowledge, or understanding in the mysteries of the gospel.* Some imagine that this is very easily attained,—nothing requisite but what is equally necessary in the acquisition of any art or science: and it would be well if some persons would but take as much pains to obtain this knowledge as they do in learning other things, which will turn to little account. The cursory perusal of a few books is thought sufficient to make a man wise enough to become a minister; and more than a few persons undertake to be public teachers, who would scarcely be admitted as tolerable disciples in a well-ordered church: but more belongs to this wisdom than most men are aware of.—Were the

nature of it duly considered, probably some would not rush into that work as they do. It is such a comprehension of the scope and end of the Scripture,—such an acquaintance with the system of doctrinal truths, in their rise, tendency, and use,—such a habit of mind in judging of spiritual things, and comparing them with each other, as enables men to make known to others the way of life, of faith, and obedience. Now, this is the special gift of the Holy Spirit:—He gives the *word of wisdom* (1 Cor. xii. 8); and where this is not, to look for a ministry, is to look for the living among the dead: and they will deceive their own souls in the end, as they do those of others in the mean time, who, on any other grounds, undertake to be preachers of the gospel.

2. *Skill to divide the word aright*, is requisite to the ministry of the gospel, and is also a peculiar gift of the Spirit. “Study to approve thyself unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. ii. 15)—both the former clauses depend on the latter. If a minister would be accepted of God,—if he would be found at the last day “a workman that needs not to be ashamed,” he must take care to divide the word of truth which is committed to his dispensation in a due manner. This is, as a wise steward, taking out from those great stores of truth which are in the Scripture; and, as it were, cutting off a portion suitable to the various conditions of the different members of the family; and without this, a common course of preaching, without distinguishing persons and truths, however it may be gilded over with a flourish of oratory, is shameful work in the house of God! Now, to this skill, several things are required. (1.) A sound judgment concerning the state of those to whom the word is dispensed. The minister must know the state of his people:—whether they are babes, or young men, or fathers,—whether, in the judgment of Charity, they are converted to God or not,—what are their hindrances and temptations,—what is their growth or decay. (2.) An acquaintance with the methods of divine grace on the

hearts of men. Nothing is more necessary than this, though nothing is more despised. He who is ignorant of the ordinary operations of grace, fights uncertainly in preaching the word,—like a man beating the air! God can indeed direct a word of truth, spoken as it were at random, to a proper effect of grace on an individual,—as when the man who drew a bow at a venture, smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness; but, usually, a man is not likely to hit a joint, who knows not how to take his aim. (3.) An acquaintance with the nature of temptation,—with the special hindrances of faith and obedience, to which the hearers of the word are exposed, is likewise necessary. (4.) A right understanding of the nature of spiritual diseases, with their proper remedies; without which the hearts of the wicked are frequently made glad, and those of the righteous filled with sorrow. Men who know not these things cannot distribute the word aright; and it is lamentable to consider what shameful work is made by some men in preaching the word, for want of this knowledge; yea, how the whole gift is lost as to its power and benefit!

3. *The gift of utterance* belongs to the dispensation of the gospel. This the apostle reckons among the gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor. i. 5. 2 Cor. viii. 5); and he desires the prayers of the church, that this gift may abide and abound in him. Eph. vi. 19.—This utterance consists not in a natural volubility of speech (which is sometimes a snare to those who possess it, and a trouble to their hearers) nor in a rhetorical ability to set off a discourse with a flourish of words, much less in a bold corruption of the ordinance of preaching, by quaint expressions and the sallies of wit; but it consists in *liberty of speech* (PARRESIA) *dicendi libertas*,—freedom and liberty in the declaration of the truth; such as the apostle speaks of in 2 Cor. vi. 11, “O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open to you; our heart is enlarged!” A free, enlarged spirit with an ability of speech, suited to the matter in hand, belongs to this gift. (2.) Boldness and confidence.—When the Spirit of God, in the midst of diffi-

culties and opposition, strengthens the minds of ministers, so that they discharge their work freely, as considering whose message it is that they deliver, it belongs to this gift of utterance. (3.) So also does gravity of expression become the sacred majesty of Christ, and the delivery of his truth. He that speaks, is to speak "as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. iv. 11);—not only as preaching the truth of God and nothing else, but as doing it with a becoming gravity and soundness of speech. (4.) To this also belongs that *authority* which accompanies the delivery of the word, when preached in demonstration of these spiritual abilities; for all these things are necessary, that the hearers may receive the gospel, not as the word of man, but, as it is indeed the word of God!

The second head of ministerial duties respects the Worship of God. I mean that part of it of which God himself is the immediate object; and this worship includes various actions, according to the variety of the institutions of Christ, and the occasions of the church. Of these, *prayer* is the chief; by which we understand confessions, supplications, and thanksgivings, whether absolutely, or in the administration of other ordinances—as the Sacraments. In this comprehensive duty the glory of God is greatly concerned. The performance of this depends either on the natural abilities of men, or on the aids of the Holy Spirit. Now, to suppose that it should depend on the abilities of men, without any assistance of the Spirit, is to exclude him from those very things for which he is principally promised by Christ. Those who have not received this gift, are utterly unfit to undertake the work of the ministry. In secular affairs, it would be esteemed an intolerable solecism to call a man to the discharge of a duty, the execution of which depended entirely on a peculiar faculty of which he was totally destitute; and it will one day appear to be so in things sacred and religious; yea, and much more.

Thirdly. The *rule* of the church belongs to the ministers of it. God has established a rule in the church; and it is committed to the ministers of it, who

are its guides, rulers, and overseers. Rom. xii. 8. 1 Cor. xii. 28. 1 Tim. v. 17. 1 Thess. v. 12. Heb. xiii. 17.—This rule is *spiritual*, and has nothing in common with the administration of the powers of this world. It belongs to the kingdom of Christ, which is “not of this world:” and the design of this rule is purely the edification of the church,—the increase of the faith and obedience of all its members, mortification of sin, fruitfulness in good works, the consolation of believers, and the recovery of backsliders. Hence it appears what is the nature of those qualifications, and of that skill which is necessary in those by whom this rule is administered; and these we affirm to be a peculiar gift of the Holy Ghost. If it were only skill in the civil or canon law (an acquaintance with the rules of certain courts, proceeding litigiously by citations, mulcts, coercions, or imprisonments) I should readily acknowledge that no gift of the Holy Spirit was requisite; but the nature of it being what we have declared, it is impossible that it should be performed aright without divine assistance. It is the Holy Ghost who makes the elders of the church its overseers or bishops (Acts xx. 28); and what he calls any man unto, that he qualifies him for, by suitable gifts.

There are also gifts which respect *duties* only, and which are given to *all* the members of the church, in a great variety of degrees, according to their places and conditions. The Spirit of grace quickens, animates, and unites the whole body of the church in and to Jesus Christ; and furnishes all its members with spiritual abilities for its edification. Every individual needs these on his own account; and they are needed by most men for the discharge of relative duties; as in families, for the worship of God and the instruction of children and servants. Also every member of a church needs some spiritual gift to fill up his place therein. 1 Pet. iv. 10. Believers are to admonish one another, to exhort one another, and to build up one another in their most holy faith: and it is the loss of those spiritual gifts which has occasioned such a neglect of these duties, that they are scarcely heard of

among the generality of Christians. Yet, blessed be God, we have an experience of the continuance of this dispensation of the Spirit, in the eminent abilities of a multitude of private Christians. By some, I confess, they have been abused,—some have presumed upon them beyond their proper time,—some have been puffed up, and some have used them in a disorderly manner (all which miscarriages befell the primitive churches also); yet I had rather have the order, spirit, and practice of those churches which were planted by the apostles, with all their inconveniences, than the carnal peace of others in their open degeneracy from all those things.

It remains only that we enquire How many persons attain a participation of these gifts, whether ministerial or more private? And here we may observe, That they are not communicated by a sudden *afflatus*, or extraordinary infusion, like the gifts of miracles and tongues bestowed on the apostles and first converts. That dispensation of the Spirit has long since ceased; and where it is now pretended to by any, it may be justly suspected as an enthusiastic delusion. Again: These gifts are not absolutely attainable by our own diligence in the use of means, without respect to the sovereign will of the Holy Spirit; for they are *CHARISMATA*,—*arbitrary largesses*, which he bestows severally as he pleaseth; and hence we see the different events which are among persons exercised in the same studies and endeavours;—some are endued with eminent gifts,—some scarcely attain any thing that is useful,—and some despise them altogether. There is, therefore, an immediate operation of the Spirit of God in the collation of these spiritual gifts, which is unaccountable by the measures of natural parts and industry; and yet, I observe, that ordinarily they are both attained and increased by the due use of suitable means, as grace itself also is; among which is, in the first place, required, a preparation of soul by humility, meekness, and teachableness. The Holy Spirit delights not to impart his special gifts to proud, self-conceited men, vainly puffed up in their fleshly minds.

The same may be said of other vicious and depraved habits of mind, by which they are sometimes excluded, after they have been, in some measure, received. Prayer is also a principal means for their attainment. The apostle directs to this, when he exhorts to covet the best gifts; for this desire is to be expressed only by prayer. Diligence in the things about which these gifts are conversant, is also necessary. I mean, particularly, study and meditation on the word of God, with the use of means for attaining the knowledge of his mind therein; for it is in this course that, usually, the Holy Spirit comes in, and affords his aid for furnishing the mind with these spiritual endowments. The improvement of these gifts depends on their faithful use. It is trade alone that increases talents; and it is exercise, in a way of duty, which increases gifts. Without this, they will first wither, and then perish! By neglect hereof are they lost every day; in some partially, in others totally; and in some to a contempt, hatred, and blasphemy of what themselves had received. Lastly, The natural endowments of men, with elocution, memory, and judgment, improved by reading, learning, and diligent study, enlarge and adorn these gifts where they are received.

ON THE CAUSES, WAYS, AND MEANS OF UNDERSTANDING THE MIND OF GOD IN THE SCRIPTURES.

OUR present enquiry is, *How may we attain a right perception of the mind of God in the Scripture, in opposition to ignorance, errors, mistakes, and all false apprehensions, so as to perform, in a right manner, all the duties therein required of us?*

In answer to this enquiry, I shall consider, 1st, The principal efficient cause; and, 2dly, All the means, internal and external, appointed of God for the purpose proposed.

As to the first of these,—*it is the Holy Spirit of God alone; for there is a special work of the Spirit on the minds of men, communicating spiritual wisdom, light,*

and understanding unto them, necessary to their discerning aright the mind of God in his word. Hereby we do not understand any *new* or *immediate* prophetic inspirations; nor do we depend on the authoritative interpretation of any church whatever; nor do we believe that, in the mere exercise of our natural reason, however externally helped, we can attain this knowledge; but that there is a special work of the Spirit in the *supernatural illumination* of our minds; and by this alone we obtain a "full assurance of understanding in the knowledge of the mystery of God."

The whole of our assertion is comprised in the prayer of the Psalmist (Ps. cxix. 18) "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wonderful things out of thy law." In the law of God, that is in the revelation of God's will in the Scriptures, there are wonderful things—things that have such an impression of divine wisdom and power upon them, that they are justly the objects of our admiration: these it is our duty to behold, to discern, to understand. We are not able of ourselves to do this, without divine assistance; therefore, the Psalmist prays that God would "open his eyes," uncover, unveil them. There is a sacred light in the word; but there is a covering,—a veil on the eyes of men, so that they cannot behold it aright. Now the removal of this veil is the peculiar work of the Holy Spirit.

The meaning of the Psalmist will better appear, if we consider the communication of the grace he prayed for unto others:—"Then opened he their understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures." Luke xxiv. 55. A needless work, if some men may be believed! But Christ thought not so. The truths concerning him were revealed "in the law, the prophets, and the psalms,"—ver. 44. These were constantly read; and the persons referred to were probably well skilled in the literal sense of those Scriptures; yet they could not rightly understand these wonderful things until Christ opened their minds.

There is another eminent passage to this purpose (Eph. i. 17, &c.) "That the God of our Lord Jesus

Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him ; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened," &c. Now, if men would acquiesce, by faith, in what is here declared, we need not plead the cause any further : for the expressions of the truth here used are more emphatic, as a spiritual understanding than any we can find out.

It is not a *new, immediate, external* revelation that is here prayed for. Believers are not directed to look for such a revelation as their guide ; but there is an *internal, subjective* revelation, whereby we are enabled to discern the things already revealed in the word ; and the Holy Spirit is here called " The Spirit of Revelation," *causally*, as he is the author, a principal efficient cause of it ; so, in his communication to Christ himself, he is called " The Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, the Spirit of Knowledge, that should make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord." Isa. xi. 2, 3.

What the Psalmist (Ps. cxix.) calls, in general, " wonderful things," the apostle particularizes " the hope of God's calling,—the riches of his glory,—the exceeding greatness of his power in believers." These are the wonderful things proposed to us in the Scripture ; and we can have no understanding of them but as they are revealed to us : and the reason why some men judge it to be so easy to comprehend them is, because they do not think there is any thing great, wonderful, or glorious in them. They therefore love to corrupt and debase them, that they may suit their own low carnal apprehensions. This is the principle that works effectually in the whole system of Socinianism.

Concerning these things, the apostle prays that the Ephesians might " know them." It is said of " the natural man" (1 Cor. ii. 14) " he cannot know them ;" that is by the use of outward means alone ; but the apostle prays, with peculiar solemnity and earnestness, that they might understand them ; but what reason was there for this earnestness ? Were not the Ephesians *rational* men ? Probably, they were as wise and learn-

ed as any in our days. Acts xix. 19. Yet to know the mind of God in the Scriptures aright, it was necessary that "the eyes of their understanding should be enlightened;" and that "the Spirit of wisdom and revelation" should be given them for that end.

For the same purpose did our Lord promise the Holy Spirit to believers (John xvi. 13): "When the Spirit of Truth is come, he shall guide you into all truth." He is the Spirit of truth, not only as he is absolute, divine, eternal verity, but as he is the Revealer of all divine, supernatural truth to the church. It is not *all truth*, absolutely, that is intended, as natural, civil, and historical truth; but the mysteries of the gospel-kingdom,—the counsel of God concerning the salvation of the church by Jesus Christ, together with their faith and obedience that is intended: he is promised to instruct in the knowledge of truths externally revealed in the word, in a spiritual manner; and this promise was not to the apostles, or first disciples only: the residence of the Spirit in the church was to be "for ever" (John xiv. 16); and what Christ prayed for his apostles, he desired "for all who should believe in him, through their word, unto the end of the world." John xvii.—It is the same as is intended in that promise, "They shall be all taught of God." This is again affirmed concerning all believers, in 1 John ii. 20, 27, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and know all things; the same anointing teacheth you of all things." By this *unction*, the Holy Spirit and his work are doubtless intended,—alluding to the anointing of kings and priests of old; and believers, who are partakers of the internal unction, in the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, are said to be "kings and priests unto God." The effect of this work is (1.) "They know all things;" and (2.) They "need not that any should teach them." They know all things; that is, all things necessary to their being ingrafted into Christ, and continuing in him. However, they may mistake in things of lesser moment, or have but an imperfect knowledge of some doctrines; yet, in all things necessary that they may believe unto

righteousness, and make confession unto salvation, they shall truly know the mind and will of God as revealed in the Scripture; and the special end of their obtaining this knowledge is, that they may be preserved from those errors and seducers which may be expected.

It is also said, "They need not that any should teach them;"—that is, the things before mentioned, as to their initial knowledge of them, and the substance of the things themselves; but yet there are further degrees of knowledge to which all believers should aspire: Heb. vi. 1. But the principal thing is, they need not that any should teach them, so that they should depend on the light and authority of their instruction. Others may be "helpers of their joy," but none can be lords of their faith: they need no such teaching, because of the unction which they have received.

Here I shall only observe, what assurance a man who is thus taught the truth may have, that it is the truth which he is taught, and that he is not deceived in his apprehensions of it; for on this depends the use of this instruction, especially in a time of trial. It is not enough that we know the truth, but we must be assured that we do so. This the apostle calls "The riches of the full assurance of understanding." Col. ii. 2.—The assurance of mind, in other teaching, depends much on the authority of the teacher; so here:—"The anointing is truth, and is no lie." It is infallibly true: there is no possibility of deceit in what is taught by this unction. This assurance arises partly from the manner of the Spirit's teaching, and partly from the evidence of the things themselves which are taught. The manner of his teaching is by the Scriptures of truth; and he gives a secret witness to what he teacheth; "for it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth" (1 John v. 6.); and, with respect to the evidence, it is said, that "the unction whereby we are taught is truth, and no lie." It is impossible that any one should be deceived who is so taught. There is a peculiar power accompanying the preaching of God by

his Spirit: "Behold, God exalteth by his power;—who teacheth like him?" Job xxxvi. 22. So our Saviour expounds that promise: "They shall be all taught of God."—"Every man," he adds, "that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh unto me." John vi. 45.—There is such an efficacy accompanying the teaching of God, that whoever is so taught, doth certainly believe the things which he is taught, as having the evidence of their truth in himself; for "he that believeth; hath the witness (or testimony) in himself." 1 John v. 10. There is an evidence in the things themselves, to spiritual sense and judgment (Phil. i. 9. Heb. v. 24.) which gives the mind the highest assurance of which it is capable; for when it finds in itself the power and efficacy of the truth in which it is instructed, that it works, effects, and implants the things themselves upon it, then, I say, the mind hath the utmost assurance in the truth of it which it can desire.

There is another part of the work of the Spirit, with respect to the illumination of our minds, which must be considered; and this concerns the Scripture itself; for this he hath so disposed, that it should be a moral way or means for the communication of divine revelations to the minds of men. We assert, therefore, "That the Holy Spirit of God hath prepared and disposed of the Scripture, so that it may be a sufficient and perfect means of communicating to our minds that saving knowledge of God and his will which is needful, in order to our living to him, and coming to the enjoyment of him in glory!"

He hath not indeed reduced its doctrines to any system, order, or method, like our catechisms, confessions of faith, &c.; but they are to be gathered out of histories, prophecies, prayers, songs, and epistles. Many sufficient reasons may be assigned why no such method has been observed; but it is sufficient to say, that the way God has chosen is absolutely the best way; because he has appointed it. This we certainly know, that the Holy Spirit hath so composed the Scripture, that the mind of God, in all things which respect our faith and obedience, in the knowledge of

which our illumination consists, is clearly revealed therein. There are, it is true, many things contained in the Scripture which are deep, wonderful, and mysterious,—things in their own nature incomprehensible. Such are the doctrines of the Trinity, the Incarnation of Christ, the Decrees of God, the Resurrection of the Dead, &c.; but yet the wisdom of the Holy Spirit hath provided against our suffering from our own weakness; for whatever is necessary for us to believe concerning these things is plainly revealed; and he who thinks we can believe nothing as to *its truth*, but what we can comprehend as to *its nature*, overthrows all faith and reason too. Besides, that degree of knowledge of these things to which we can attain, is every way sufficient, with respect to the end of the revelation itself. Some things indeed are difficult, from the manner of their revelation, as allegories, genealogies, unfulfilled prophecies, &c.; but whatever is thus expressed in any place, if it be of consequence for us to understand it, is elsewhere so plainly declared, that we may say of it as the disciples to our Lord, “Lo, now he speaketh plainly, and not in parables;” and if any parts of the Scripture still remain obscure, it is for the exercise of our faith, diligence, humility, and dependence on God in our inquiries into them. The Holy Spirit has also given us a relief in this matter, by supplying us with a rule for the interpretation of Scripture, which, if we sincerely regard, we shall be in no danger of sinfully corrupting the word of God, even though we should not obtain the exact meaning of every particular passage; and this rule is *The Analogy, or Proportion of Faith*. “Let him that prophesieth,” that is, expoundeth the Scripture in the church, “do it according to the proportion of faith” (Rom. xii. 6.); and this analogy or proportion, is what is plainly and uniformly taught in the whole Scripture as the rule of our faith and obedience. There is such a mutual relation of divine truths to one another, that each of them is, in a manner, in every place, if not properly, yet by consequence and coherence; so that if a man should miss of the first proper sense of any ob-

scure text, yet while he receives none but what is revealed in some other place, the error endangers not his own faith or obedience, nor those of others.

We are now to consider THE MEANS which it is our duty to use for the right understanding of the mind of God in the Scripture.

The first of these is, diligent reading the Scripture, with a sedate, rational consideration of what we read. Hereby the minds of men are brought into a general acquaintance with the nature and design of the book of God: they exercise their thoughts on heavenly things; they obtain due conceptions of God and of themselves; they come to have their "senses exercised to distinguish between good and evil, truth and error;" and God is often pleased thus to influence their souls with the efficacy of divine truth, in the way of exhortation, reproof, instruction, or consolation.

But, besides a cursory reading, pains should be taken to enquire into its real meaning, in particular places. The Scripture is to be studied with care and diligence; in which I include a constant regard to the analogy of faith, an examination of the scope of place, and an observation of the antecedents and consequents. This is the first, general, outward means of learning the mind of God in his word.

In the use of these means, and to render them effectual, there are certain helps, which may be termed, 1. *Spiritual*,—2. *Disciplinary*,—3. *Ecclesiastical*.

The first thing required, as a spiritual means, is prayer,—servent, earnest prayer, for the assistance of the Spirit; that he would enlighten our minds, and lead us into the knowledge of the truth. The importance of this grace to our faith and obedience, the multiplied promises of God concerning it, the necessity of it from our natural weakness and darkness, should render it a principal part of our daily supplications. This is indispensably necessary, and without this all other means will be insufficient. Nor do I believe that any one who thus prays, will ever be left to the final

prevalence of any pernicious error, or the ignorance of any fundamental truth. None utterly miscarry in seeking after the mind of God, but those who are perverted by their own corrupt minds:—but faith, exercised in this duty, will expel that “filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness,” which could prevent our receiving the ingrafted word with meekness, to the saving of our souls. It will produce in our minds those gracious qualifications of humility and meekness, unto which the teachings of God are promised; and our Saviour hath assured us, that “his heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.”

Fervent prayer for divine teaching is more especially necessary from those who are called to declare the mind of God to others; and great are the advantages which a conscientious discharge of this duty brings along with it. Prejudices, preconceived opinions, engagements by secular advantages, human authority, the influence of societies, and of parties, will all be levelled before it; for it includes a prevailing resolution sincerely to receive the mind of God, whatever effects it may produce upon the inward or outward man. Indeed, for a man solemnly to undertake the interpretation of any portion of Scripture without *invocation of God*, to be taught and instructed by his Spirit, is a high provocation to him; nor shall I expect the discovery of truth from any one who thus proudly engages in a work so much above his ability; but this is the *sheet-anchor* of a faithful expositor in all difficulties: nor can he, without this, be satisfied that he hath attained the mind of the Spirit in any divine revelation. When all other helps fail, as they frequently do, this will afford him the best relief. The labours of former expositors are of excellent use; but they are far from having discovered the depths of the vein of wisdom; nor will the best of our endeavours prescribe limits to our successors; and the reason why the generality of expositors go in the same track, except in some excursions of curiosity, is, not giving themselves up to the conduct of the Holy Ghost in the diligent performance of their duty.

Readiness to receive impressions from divine truths, as revealed to us in the Scripture, is another means to the same end. The design of all divine revelations is to produce their image and likeness in our minds; and we miss our aim if this be not our first object in the study of the Bible. He only is in a posture to learn of God, who sincerely gives up his mind, conscience, and affections, to the power and rule of what is revealed to him.

Practical obedience, in the course of our walking before God, is another means to the same end. Herein alone can we be assured that what we learn is indeed the truth. So our Saviour says, John vii. 17. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." While men learn the truth only in the notion of it, whatever conviction of its being so it is accompanied with, they will never attain stability in their minds, unless they exemplify it in their obedience, by doing the will of God. Hence we see so many that lose that very understanding of the truth, which they had of the doctrines of it, when once they abandon themselves to ungodly lives.

A constant desire and endeavour to increase in knowledge, arising from the love of truth and experience of its excellency, is very useful, yea needful to the right understanding the mind of God in the Scripture. Some are apt to think they know enough already, or, perhaps, all that is to be known of divine things. I expect no great or useful discoveries of the mind of God from such persons. A different frame of heart is necessary in those who wish to be instructed;—they continually press forward in the use of all means to "increase in this wisdom,"—"to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ." This frame of mind is under a promise of divine teaching—"Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord." Hosea vi. 3. "If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding: if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasure, then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God." Prov. ii. 3, &c. When men

- live in holy admiration of God, as the God of truth; when they adore the fulness of those revelations of himself, which he hath treasured up in the Scripture; and, under a deep sense of the meanness of their own attainments, abide patiently in the study of the word, they are in the way of being taught by him, and of learning his mind, under all the proper ends of its revelation.

The second sort of means I call *Disciplinarian*, as consisting in the due use and improvement of arts and sciences, applied to the study of the Scripture; the first of which is skill in the languages wherein the Scripture was originally written; for the very words of the Scripture were peculiarly from the Holy Spirit.

It must be acknowledged, that reading the Bible, as written in the original languages, is accompanied with many and great advantages. In them, peculiarly, it is a *writing by divine inspiration* (2 Tim. iii. 16); and the *book of the writing of the Lord* (Isa. xxxiv. 16) with a singular privilege above all translations. Hence the very words themselves, as there used and placed, are *sacred, consecrated by God*, to that holy use; every *apex, tittle, or iota*, is therefore important; and sometimes divine senses and singular mysteries may be couched in the use and disposal of a single letter, as in the change of the names of *Abram* and *Sarai*. There is also, in the originals, a peculiar emphasis of words and expressions, and in them a special energy, intimating the sense of the Holy Ghost, which cannot be translated so as to retain that power and efficacy. The knowledge, therefore, of these languages is of great use to those who are called to interpret the Scriptures; and the Church of God has derived no small advantage from the labours of learned men; but yet, this skill is not a duty in itself, nor enjoined upon any for its own sake, but only as it has a goodness in it, with respect to a certain end: but the sense and substance of the Scripture being retained entirely in every *good translation* (among which that in use among ourselves is excellent) men may, by the use of the means before mentioned, and under the conduct and teaching of the

Holy Spirit, usefully and rightfully expound the Scripture, in general, to the edification of others; many instances of which, both ancient and modern, may easily be given.

An acquaintance with *history, geography, and chronology*, as also skill in the *art of reasoning*, are among the disciplinarian aids which greatly assist in the interpretation of Scripture; and those who undertake the exposition of any series of Scripture discourse, without some knowledge of these sciences, will often find themselves at a loss. This, however, must be admitted with proper limitations; for whatever perfection there seems to be in our art of reasoning, it is to be subjected to the wisdom of the Holy Ghost. His way of reasoning is always his own, and sometimes so sublime and heavenly, as not to be reduced to the common rules of our arts and sciences, without a derogation from its instructive, convincing, and persuasive efficacy.

Thirdly,—there are means and helps which may be called *ecclesiastical*,—that is, such as we are supplied with by the *ministry of the Church*, in all ages.

It is pleaded by some that the Scripture is to be interpreted only according to *catholic or universal tradition*; but whatever some pretend, or boast of, no man living can prove his interpretation of any one passage to be dictated or warranted by universal tradition, any otherwise than as he can prove it to be agreeable to the Scripture itself; unless we admit, without proof, that the judgment of some men, who now call themselves *the Church*, was really the mind of Christ, his apostles, and all true believers ever since.

The *joint consent of the Fathers*, or ancient Doctors of the Church, is also pretended to be the rule of Scripture-interpretation; but it is impossible that they should be an authentic rule to others who disagree so much from each other in their expositions; but the pretence of the authoritative determination of the Fathers, in points of religion, hath been so fully disproved, that it need not be here insisted upon.

We say, therefore, that the sole use of *ecclesiastical*

means in the interpretation of Scripture, is, in the due consideration and improvement of that *light* and *understanding* in, and those *gifts* for, the declaration of the mind of God in his word, which he hath granted to those who have gone before us in the ministry of the gospel: for, as God has, in all ages, taken care that the doctrine of the gospel should be preached, *viva voce*, to the edification of the Church, so that he, in almost all ages, stirred up sundry persons to declare, by *writing*, their understanding of his mind in the Scripture. Of those who designedly wrote comments, *Origen* was the first; whose fooleries and mistakes, occasioned by the prepossessions of his mind with *Platonic philosophy*, confidence in his own great abilities, with the curiosity of a speculative mind, discouraged not others, with more sobriety and better success, to write expositions on some entire parts of the Scripture. Such, among the Greeks, were *Chrysostom*, *Theodoret*, *Arretine*, *Oecomenius*, *Theophylact*; and among the Latins, *Jerom*, *Ambrose*, *Austin*, and others. These were followed by vast multitudes in succeeding ages; and, especially since the Reformation, with great success. All these are singular helps to the right understanding the Scripture; and it is easy to discern, by the diversity of their gifts, that the Holy Spirit "has divided unto them as he pleased." The same Spirit renders them useful, according to the counsel of his own will. Some are prone, in the use of them, to lean to their own understandings, and to wander after the imagination of their minds; and others he leaves in the *shell of the text*, to exercise their skill about mere words, without leading them into the spiritual sense of the word, which is its life and power. In some, he blesseth them to the full and proper end, but not unless they are in a compliance with the spiritual means and duties before insisted upon.

It may be objected to what has now been advanced,
1. That those who have not divine assistance afforded to them, cannot understand the truth contained in the Scripture, and therefore are not to be blamed:—2. That those who are guided by the Spirit must under-

stand *all* the Scripture correctly, without any sort of mistake: both which are contrary to matter of fact; for many persons who are evidently destitute of any saving work of the Spirit on their minds, have, nevertheless, attained a considerable knowledge of the truth; and it is evident also, that some who are truly enlightened and sanctified, do fall into various errors and mistakes. A brief answer to these objections will close this discourse.

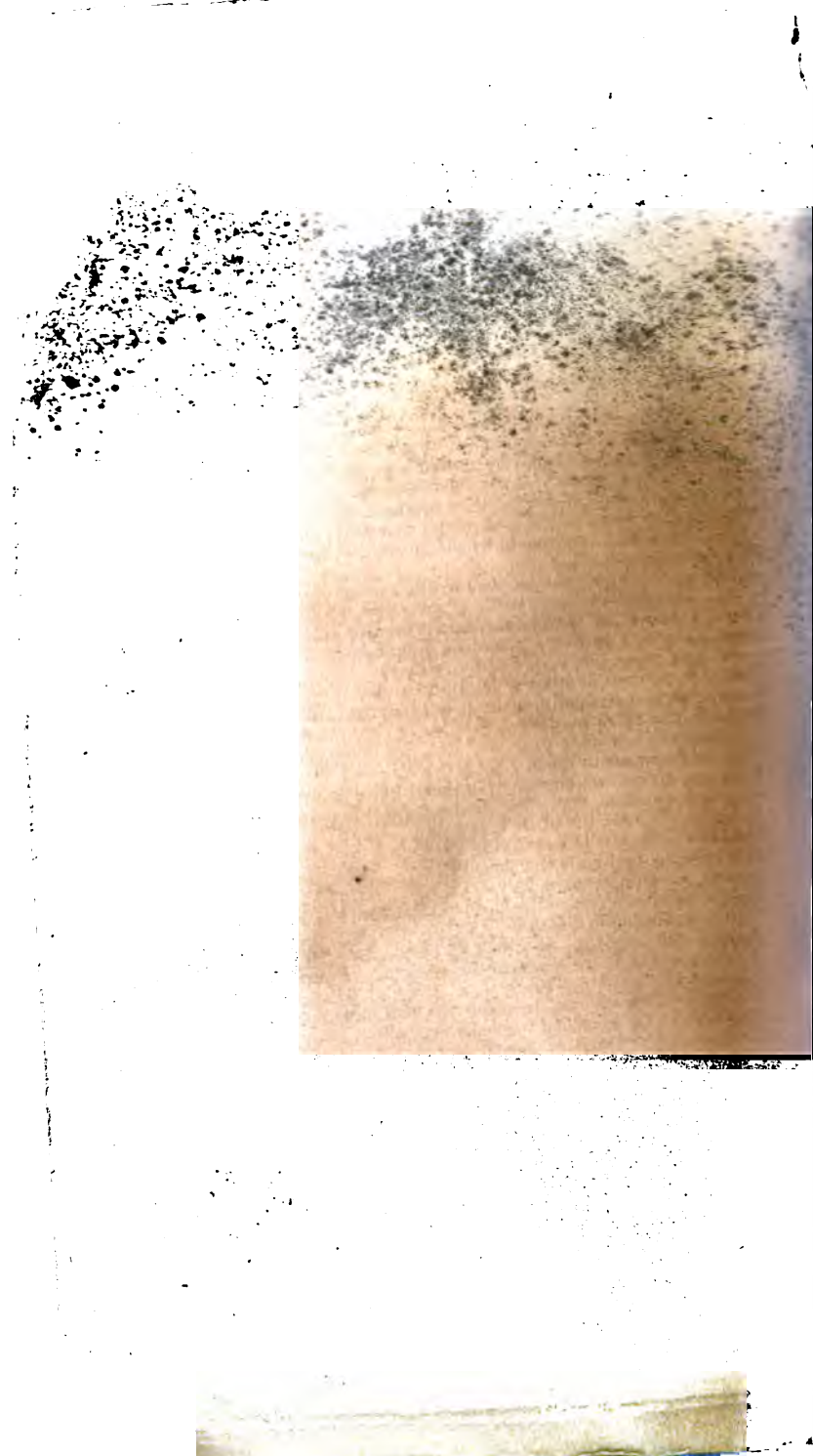
(1.) There are, in the Scripture, sundry things that are common to other writings, such as historical facts, phrases of speech, various kinds of arguments, &c. all which persons may clearly understand without the special assistance of the Holy Spirit. (2.) The principal doctrines of truth are proposed in such a plain and distinct manner, that persons attending to them without prejudice, and in the use of ordinary means, may understand them without any special work of *saving illumination* on their minds. The propositions of truth are so plain and evident, that it is the fault and sin of men, endued with rational powers, if they do not perceive and assent to them. (3.) Considering the *natural vanity* of the human mind, and its proneness to error, whatever it attains in the knowledge of the truth, is to be ascribed to the Spirit of God, although not working on the mind by the communication of saving light and grace:—for (4.) The knowledge of truth, thus attained, is not that *illumination* which we are thus enquiring after; nor does it produce those effects of renewing the mind, and transforming it into the image of the things known, together with the fruits of holy obedience, which are inseparable from saving illumination.

In answer to the second objection:—I observe, (1.) That the promise of the Spirit “to teach, instruct, and guide into all truth,” is suited to that great end for which God hath given us his word, namely, that we might live to him here according to his will, and hereafter be brought to his glory. (2.) That it is not necessary that we should understand the direct sense and meaning of any particular text of Scripture, nor yet

that we should obtain the knowledge of every thing therein revealed ; it is sufficient that the knowledge of all truth necessary to that end be communicated to us.

(3.) We are not hereby absolutely secured from particular mistakes, no more than we are secured from all actual sins, by the renewing grace of God on our wills; but as the wills of believers are so far renewed by grace as to preserve them from such sins as are inconsistent with a holy life, according to the tenor of the covenant, which yet leaves a possibility of many infirmities and actual sins, so their *minds* are so far renewed as to know and assent to all truths *necessary to their life of obedience*, which may yet consist with many mistakes to their great disadvantage: but, it must be added, such are the teachings of the Spirit of God, as to all divine truths, both in the revelation of them in Scripture, and in the assistance he gives us to understand his mind therein, that it is not without our own *sin*, as well as *weakness*, that we err in any scriptural propositions concerning our duty to God. And, if all who believe would lay aside their prejudices and preconceived opinions, and all impressions arising from worldly advantages, yielding themselves humbly and entirely to the teachings of God, we might all come "in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Eph. iv. 13. And these things may suffice to illustrate the work of the Holy Spirit in our *illumination*, with respect to the external objective causes thereof, or the holy Scripture itself.

THE END.



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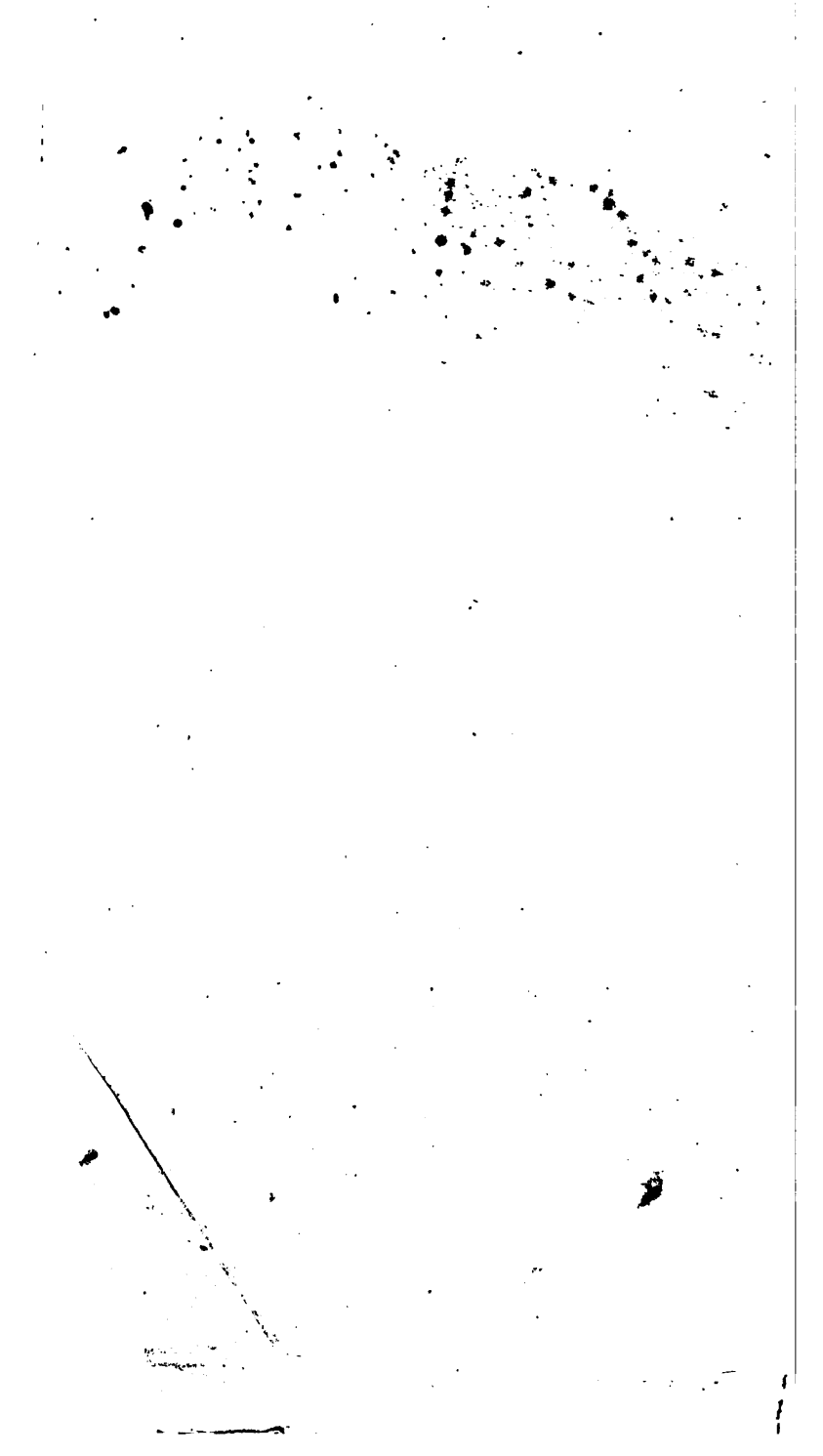
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